# MARGERY'S VACATION

ELLA BEECHER GITTINGS

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"Thin, I tell yer to yer face that ye're no lady at all."

Margery's Vacation. Page 123.

# MARGERY'S VACATION

BY

ELLA BEECHER GITTINGS

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# CONTENTS.

CHAPTER PAGE

I. The Beginning of It . . . . . . . . . . 5

II. Bearing the Infirmities of the Weak . . . 16

III. The "Wild-goose Notion" . . . . . . . . 22

IV. An Unexpected Turn of Affairs . . . . . 35

V. The First Day at Mrs. Morgan's . . . . . 46

VI. Sunday . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 64

VII. The First Letters . . . . . . . . . . . 86

VIII. Margery's Charge . . . . . . . . . . . 103

IX. A Page or Two of Margery's Journal . . . 114

X. Margery's Sunday-school Class . . . . . . 128

XI. Applied Theology . . . . . . . . . . . 139

XII. Maggie Dart . . . . . . . . . . . . . 155

XIII. Margery and Maggie . . . . . . . . . . 170

XIV. Margery Meets a Friend . . . . . . . . 190

XV. The Native . . . . . . . . . . . . . 199

XVI. Mother's Letter . . . . . . . . . . . 211

XVII. Nora . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 218

XVIII. A Visit to Miss Gail . . . . . . . . . 237

XIX. A New Acquaintance . . . . . . . . . . 255

XX. A Ride and a Talk . . . . . . . . . . 272

XXI. In the Country . . . . . . . . . . . . 288

XXII. The Kaleidoscope . . . . . . . . . . . 302

# MARGERY'S VACATION.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE BEGINNING OF IT.

A HAMMOCK in an orchard! O Margie Mayne, how delicious that would be! A real orchard, with apples in it and soft grass under foot; with a cool breeze swaying the hammock, and bees humming and birds flitting in and out among the branches, butterflies skimming in across the flecks of sunlight between the leaves, and nothing to do for hours, maybe, but just to lie and rest — to see it and feel it all around you, the dear, old-fashioned summer, such as people had before they grew so crazy or so poor or wicked as to build prisons with high brick walls filled with scorching sun and stifling air and foul smells, and call them cities; before" —

"Why, Gertie, how you talk!" exclaimed Margery, astonished at her friend's strange outburst.

"If cities are such wicked places, why don't you live in the country?"

"Oh, if I only could!"

These words were spoken with such pathetic earnestness that Margery turned suddenly to look at her companion. Tears were standing in Gertrude's eyes, and her pale face looked drawn and old.

"O Gertie, Gertie! what is the matter with you? I never saw you look that way before;" and Margery grasped her friend's hand and looked earnestly into her face.

"Oh, nothing, Margery! Don't mind it, please. Only sometimes I get so tired that I think I can sympathize with the old negro that mamma tells about. You know he said that when he went to heaven he did n't want to sing or carry palm branches or anything like that; but he should just ask the Lord to let him go on the shady side of heaven and sit down and rest till noon; and then when noon came change to the other shady side and rest until night. And because I get so tired, I suppose the thought of the hammock and the orchard just set me off; that 's all. There, now, let us go. Mother will need me to get supper, and I am so sorry I let you see how nervous and foolish I am. Please forget about it;" and Gertrude rose hastily from the park bench, where the girls had been resting and chatting on their way from school.

"But you must not go, Gertie, until you tell me all about it. It 's dreadful for a young, pretty girl like you to feel that way. I never heard of such a thing in all my life. Is it really being tired and ill that makes you so pale and slender? Don't you know I have wished a hundred times that I had a delicate white face like yours instead of being so red and stout as I am? I never dreamed you were not well. It 's a shame for a healthy girl like me to be planning for a vacation in the country and never once thinking what was going to become of any one else — not even my best and dearest friend. *My* vacation, indeed! Why, I was never tired in my life — only when I made myself tired racing over the farm and through the woods in vacation. No, you shall not go until I know just what you expect to do this summer while I am in the country."

"There is not much to tell. Of course you know we are poor, and mamma and I have had the living to make for the family since papa died. I'm not strong enough to do rough work, like washing and house-cleaning, you know." Just a little shade of sarcasm touched her voice.

"I should think not," said Margery under her breath, and shrugging her plump shoulders.

"Well, as I can't do heavy work, and sewing does n't pay, I must teach school, mamma says; that 's about the only decent thing left for me to do."

"There 's music and drawing and — and such things," said Margery vaguely.

"Yes, I know; but even if I had any talent for them, which I doubt, it costs money to learn them; but the public schools luckily are free. If I am to teach them, you see I must at least finish the high school, and mother is working herself almost to death to let me do it. Sometimes I think she won't hold out until I 'm through, though I am hurrying with all my might. You know I have made an extra grade in the last two years. You have all thought me very vain and ambitious, I know, but you did n't know that I was working for mother's life" — A quick sob escaped her, and Margery brushed a sudden tear from her own eyes.

"Of course, then, during vacation I must do what I can to make it easier for mother, and, if possible, earn a little extra for books and clothes. I cannot make dresses, but I can help with the plain sewing, do all our housework, and take care of the two children. Sometimes I get a child or two to care for by the day — children whose mothers go out to work, you know. It is n't much I get for it, of course: twenty-five cents a day, perhaps — but every little helps."

"And helps to wear you all out," interrupted Margery impetuously; "and if you work as I know you do in school, and all vacation still harder, you 'll never live to teach. Oh, how I wish you had some of my superfluous strength! I 've not the least use in the world for it. It is almost a burden to me. Oh, why can't I give it to you! Things are n't equal in this world — not a bit."

"That is what the anarchists say," said Gertrude, smiling drearily; "but I don't see how we are going to help it."

Margery mused a moment in silence — a remarkable thing for her to do, by the way. Then she set her pretty red lips together tightly, and nodded her head so emphatically that her fluffy yellow curls came tumbling over her eyes.

"It shall be helped," she said; "and I am going to help it some, anyway."

Gertrude smiled again, this time not quite so bitterly. "Thank you, ever so much," she said, "for your kind intentions; but I don't see exactly how you will do it. Shall you puncture your round white arm and give me to drink of your vigorous young blood, in true heroic style, or" —

"No, indeed, I shall not," said Margery, laughing merrily, "for I don't like to be pricked, and I don't believe you are bloodthirsty either. But I have a plan in my head that I think will work splendidly; only I must talk it over with mamma first. Good-night now, and try to be happy in thinking things will be different soon;" and Margery hailed a passing car, and was off before Gertrude could reply.

Mrs. Mayne was engaged with callers when Margery came in; so that she was obliged to defer laying her suddenly-conceived plan before her mother. She went up to her own room, and throwing open a window from which she could catch a glimpse of distant hills, just greening with the soft tints of a late spring, she sat down to think it over. Gertrude's worn, white face tormented her. How stupid she had been not to see it before! It was like a revelation to her, as if a door had been suddenly opened, giving her a glimpse into a new and strange world — the world of suffering and privation, which she knew was all around her and yet had never realized.

Gertrude had said, "Of course you know we are poor." Yes — she supposed she had known it — in a way. But Gertrude's clothes were so unobtrusive and in their simple grace and perfect fit suited their wearer so well that she had never associated them with poverty: for to her, as to many others, shabby clothing was poverty's chief badge. Coarse manners, too, had been to her careless mind another seal of indigence. But Gertrude's manners were so gentle and refined as to fill her sometimes with envy. Gertrude's home, too, although not in the fashionable quarter of the city, was yet far removed from the tenement region where Margery had someway taken for granted that all poor people lived. It was a neighborhood chiefly of mechanics and small tradesmen, sober, industrious people who owned their own homes or were paying for them gradually in small sums. These homes were unpretentious cottages, many of but two or three rooms, but, almost without exception, they were tidy and well kept, and not a few of the laborers' wives found time to tend a little plot of flowers or a bit of green grass with a shrub or two on the small plat of ground surrounding each house. Of course they were at a considerable distance from the center of the city, several blocks indeed beyond the horse car line. Gertrude lived two miles from school, and it now occurred to Margery, for the first time, that she had never seen her take a car. She always walked, while Margery, who had not half the distance to go, almost invariably rode. She felt almost ashamed of it now. Since Gertrude's passionate confession of weariness, everything about her seemed to show in a new light. She resolved to turn over her weekly allowance of car tickets to Gertrude the very next morning; that is, if she would have them — which, someway, she half doubted.

A lady passing on the opposite side of the street looked up and bowed to Margery just then. It was Miss Gail, the president of the Christian Endeavor Society to which Margery and her brother Harry belonged. This reminded her that to-night was their monthly meeting, and she had not looked up her topic. Margery was quite prone to leave regular duties until the last moment. She found her card on which were printed the topics for the year, and ran her eye down the list until it reached "*May* 10. *Self-denial.*" She smiled when she saw it, and her resolve to part with her car tickets, and the plan about which she was waiting to consult her mother, made her feel quite complacent. She was a warm-hearted little body, and she dearly loved approbation; even self-approbation was pleasant to her. She opened her Bible and found the text for the evening: "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

"Why, how odd," thought Margery, "that this should be the text!" The "strong and the weak" —surely that was herself and Gertrude; and she was going to walk that Gertrude might ride. She was going to give up the new pink sateen, and if necessary carry her last season's parasol, that Gertrude might go with them into the country— if her mother were willing. This was her wonderful plan. They were going to grandpa Burney's farm, and Margery well knew that her grandmother would give a hearty welcome to any friend she chose to bring. There would be no expense except for railroad fare, unless, perhaps, Gertrude might need some little extras, such as sun hat and buckskin gloves for their long rambles in the woods. Already she was planning in her mind the good times they would have together — the walks, the rides, the berrying, the orchard with its harvest apples. There should be two hammocks instead of one — that would take part of the price of the sateen. Yes, she should have to do without a new parasol, and possibly some other article of "flummery," as Harry was fond of calling her pretty things. She was resolved that this outing for Gertrude should be all her own gift, the result of her self-denial; and so her complacency grew.

She had a few moments with her mother before tea, and hastily disclosed her plan. Mrs. Mayne had no objections, was pleased indeed with her project.

"But, Margery," she said, "are you sure that Gertrude will go? Even if you can persuade her to accept the necessary funds for the trip, where will the help for her mother come from? If Gertrude is the brave girl I think her, she will not leave her mother to bear the burden alone for two long months — no, nor even weeks."

"Yes, I have thought of that. I know she will object, but I shall make her see that if she is to support her mother by-and-by she must take care of her health now. So it is for her mother's sake she must go."

"Perhaps you can make her see it in that light," said Mrs. Mayne doubtfully, "and no doubt her mother will consent. She would make any sacrifice for Gertrude. Well, dear, you have my permission to try your persuasive powers. No doubt Gertrude needs the rest far more than you do, my child."

A sudden thought flitted through Margery's mind which made her start and look first doubtful, then grave. She shook her head. "No, that could not be done," she said to herself.

"What could not be done, Margery?"

"Oh, nothing. Only one of my 'wild-goose notions,' as papa calls them, came into my head."

Mrs. Mayne questioned her no farther, and together they went down to tea.

# CHAPTER II.

## BEARING THE INFIRMITIES OF THE WEAK.

MARGERY MAYNE had belonged to the Christian Endeavor Society for over a year, and three months ago had joined the church. Everybody loved Margery — bright, impulsive, sunny-faced Margery. Old ladies instinctively called her "my dear." To the negro woman who washed for them she was "honey." Betty, the cook, never grumbled when she entered her domain, and almost always had a tart or an extra slice of cake laid by, with which to tempt her schoolgirl appetite. When nurse had her afternoon out, it was Margery who washed and combed the children, extracted the slivers, kissed the bumps, bound up the cuts, and otherwise ministered to their numberless necessities in such a cheery fashion that Ted and Dot looked upon these afternoons as holidays scarcely outranked by Fourth of July and Thanksgiving. Sweet-tempered by inheritance and no less so by cultivation, growing up in the healthful atmosphere of a home of plenty and tender Christian care, her sixteen years of life had been like one long, sunshiny morning.

When a company of young people from the Society of Christian Endeavor presented themselves for church membership, Margery went with them and entered into her church relations as easily and naturally as she had gone from her crib to the nursery bedroom, and from the nursery bedroom to her pretty chamber upstairs. Was Margery a Christian, you say? Certainly she was. From the time when she murmured her first "Now I lay me," through the period of "Our Father," accompanied by her first personal petitions, she had never known a doubt of God's love and care, or of the allegiance she owed to his commands. As soon would she doubt her mother or question her right to direct the steps of her children. Yes, she was a Christian, only as yet she belonged to the reserve corps, having never entered into active combat with evil powers — having never indeed been brought face to face with any formidable foe. To-night as she and Harry walked toward the chapel where the Endeavor Society met, she was unusually silent. The "wild-goose notion" which she had tried to dismiss so peremptorily would not accept dismissal, and clung so persistently to her thoughts that it became fairly annoying. This notion had been born of her mother's words: "No doubt Gertrude needs the rest far more than you do, my child."

As they entered the room, Miss Gail was reading the opening hymn:—

"I gave my life for thee:
What hast thou done for me?"

It was one of Margery's favorite hymns. Possibly it was the music that had impressed her, for she suddenly became aware that until now the words had held no especial significance for her. But now, long after the singing ceased, the refrain,

"What hast thou done for me?"

echoed and reëchoed in her thoughts — just the bare words, shorn of the glamour of melody which it seemed until now had kept them from her heart. And this passage from her morning chapter seemed to accompany the refrain: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

After the singing, each member repeated a Scripture text having reference to the subject of the evening. So absorbed was Margery with her own thoughts that she started perceptibly when Harry repeated his text and she became suddenly aware that her turn came next.

"Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbour's good," repeated Harry. There was a pause, and Margery tried vainly to recall the verse she had prepared. They were waiting for her, and she repeated hastily the passage that was just now occupying her mind: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

Miss Gail smiled. "A beautiful complement of your brother's verse," she said.

So it was, but Margery had not thought of it. And now Miss Gail repeated her own text: —

"And he said unto all, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

"Many persons," she said, "seem to believe that they have fulfilled the command to seek the good of others when they have bestowed upon them merely the overflow of their own abundant blessings, the overflow of their purses, the overflow of their time and strength — the overflow of their sympathy. I wonder if there are any here to-night who have perhaps seldom, if ever, really given to a weaker brother that which cost them real self-denial. The subject of denying one's self for others embraces that of charity, or Christian love. To give what costs us nothing has in it but a feeble element of charity."

Margery thought dubiously of her car tickets, the sateen dress, and the last year's parasol. She knew she did not mind walking in the least, that she had an abundance of dresses and that her parasol was not at all shabby — she only wanted a change and to have it suit the new dress. And now for the first time she seemed to recognize the fact that the pleasure of Gertrude's company on the farm would far outweigh the little ounce of self-denial which her plans might contain.

Alone in her room that night, Margery had perhaps her first real combat with self: her first awakening to the fact that following Christ must consist of active well-doing, as well as passive abstinence from wrong. It was with her as when a ray of warm sunlight pierces the earth and says to an imbedded seed, "Arouse from your sleep. The time of the year has come when you should start and hasten to fruitage." And like a fruitful seed her heart yielded obedience to the call of the Master and began to warm and expand beneath his touch, until, under his loving guidance, appeared the fruit of which this story seeks to tell.

# CHAPTER III.

## THE "WILD-GOOSE NOTION."

MAMMA," said Margery, next morning, "I want to talk with you a little while before school. It is about Gertie."

"Very well, dear; let us go to my room, where we shall be undisturbed."

"You know, mamma," began Margery, drawing up a hassock and folding her hands upon her mother's lap, — a favorite attitude when she had some especial confidence to give, — "that I told you last night I had a 'wild-goose notion' in my head. Well, someway I could not get rid of it, and I have decided, if you will help me, to try to tame it into a useful idea."

"Well, dear, let us have it," said Mrs. Mayne, passing her hand encouragingly over Margery's half-bowed head; for she knew that, in spite of her jesting tone, her daughter was unusually serious.

"It is this, mamma. You put it into my mind when you said Gertie needed rest much more than I, — of course any one knows that, — and this was the notion: Why can't I take Gertrude's place and do her work and let her have my vacation?"

For a moment Mrs. Mayne did not answer. It was such a novel proposition that she felt tempted to tell Margery that she was right in calling it a wild notion, and doubted their being able to "tame" it. But Margery seemed so much in earnest that she disliked to dampen her ardor by an unconsidered objection; so she parleyed a little.

"Possibly you could, dear; but *could* and *should* are often different things, you know. Do you really wish to do it?"

"Yes, mamma, I think I do — that is, if I *could* and *should;* and that is what I want you to decide for me."

"Or, better still, help you to decide. Well, then, let us consider the '*coulds.*' The consent of Gertrude and her mother — would that belong here?"

"I should think so," said Margery, laughing. Someway the fact that her mother was willing to consider her plan took the first load off her mind. "If they did not consent, I certainly could n't do it."

"Very well, then: 'Could' No. 1 must be deferred until they are consulted. Next in order I should think would be, 'Could' you take Gertrude's place? Have you experience enough? What are her duties? Do you know?"

Margery enumerated them as Gertrude had done to her. Her mother looked doubtful.

"A good deal of responsibility for young and untried shoulders, I fear."

"I could try it, anyway. I know some housework, and a good deal of sewing and mending, and I get along nicely with children, don't I?"

"With your own brothers and sisters — yes. With others you do not know; you have never tried."

"I should try to think they were my own brothers."

The answer was so quietly and firmly given that Mrs. Mayne looked inquiringly into her daughter's upturned face. It wore a look of resolute purpose which she had never seen there before. It was a look to be respected, and she mentally resolved to give Margery's plan the most favorable consideration possible.

"You have thought about this a good deal, my child?"

"Yes, mamma; nearly all night. I could scarcely sleep for thinking of it. I think I know pretty well what Gertrude's work is, and I want very much to try it. I am strong and well; it could not hurt me, and if I did get a little homesick now and then, why, I suppose other girls have lived through that, and why could n't I?"

"Bravely said, my daughter; I see you have considered both sides. But I must have time to think it over. It is such a very unusual thing to do that if done at all it must be well considered. Of this, however, you may be sure: if this plan of yours is, as I think, born of a real desire to minister in His name, it shall have mother's heartiest sympathy, and if possible her consent."

"I *think* that is why I want to do it," said Margery, speaking low and her face flushing a little.

"Very well, then. I will tell you this evening what I think of it. Run now and dress for school, and don't forget that the Master will accept the will to do, even if your scheme should turn out impracticable."

If Margery had passed through a conflict with self the previous night, it was her mother who entered into one now. This "wild-goose notion" was certainly out of the beaten track of charitable work, and she wondered if Margery had really considered all that it involved. She had considered the separation from home, but did she realize what the change would be from a home of luxury to one of poverty?—for real poverty it was, Mrs. Mayne knew, no matter how respectable. Then, too, she had been accustomed to taking all her little trials and perplexities to a Christian mother for counsel, and Mrs. Morgan, Gertrude's mother, was not a Christian. She was an invalid, somewhat embittered by adversity, as people who have no hope beyond this life are almost sure to be. She was a lady by birth and education, but even a lady, destitute of the sweetening influence of grace, may, under the power of poverty and disease, become fretful and melancholy, and be anything but a cheerful companion for a bright young girl.

Mrs. Mayne had known Gertrude's mother for many years. They had been schoolmates together. She remembered her now as a handsome, brilliant girl, the leader of her class socially as well as intellectually. She had married, quite young, a man of wealth and position. Reverses had come. Her husband lost both property and health together, and three years ago had died, leaving her with three children, of whom Gertrude was the eldest. She was then thirteen, and the two boys, Walter and Fred, aged respectively five and two. When the business was settled there remained barely enough to purchase and scantily furnish the little four-room cottage in which they now lived. Having done this, proud-spirited, delicately-nurtured Mrs. Morgan entered single-handed into the struggle for food and clothing and all the daily necessities for a family of four. Her health, already impaired by long nursing and the anxiety attendant upon her husband's long illness, rapidly gave way under the strain — until the constant cough, the languid step, the bright flush upon her cheek, told all too surely the nature of her malady. No wonder then that Gertrude had said she was working for her mother's life. Day and night she planned for the coming time when she should be mistress of a village school, where her mother could rest and breathe the pure country air. Often and often, in fancy, she saw the little white cottage among the trees and her mother sitting among the flowers in the sunshine, with hands folded idly in her lap. So intense had become this longing to see her rest that her fancy could not tolerate the thought of even the lightest task.

Gertrude was like her mother; the same spirit and pride, but softened a little, perhaps, by the milder and more imaginative temperament of her father. Tall, pale, and slender, an unnatural brilliancy of eye, a forced energy of mind, yet — as she had so passionately averred to Margery in her unguarded burst of feeling — "tired all the time." "Yes, she did indeed need rest," Mrs. Mayne said to herself, with a grave shake of her head. And yet how could she let Margery go? So hard is it for the human mother to push the fledgeling from the nest. But hers was a real mother heart, and it reached beyond her own immediate brood and took in Gertrude — poor, weary, brave-hearted Gertrude. It was not only a mother heart — it was a heart given to the Master, and ever ready to listen to his voice. That voice now spoke to it the very words that had urged Margery out of her peaceful indifference: "Ye then that are strong" —

Clearly, as if illumined by a light from above, there stood out before Mrs. Mayne two golden opportunities for aiding the weak. First, to uphold Margery in her first real, active Christian service; and, second, to lead Gertrude to the service of Him whom she and Margery loved and served. In the close relation which she should sustain to Gertrude, if she came to them in her daughter's stead, what a grand opportunity to lead her to Christ! And who needed him for a friend more than she? That thought settled it, and when Margery came home in the afternoon she was rejoiced to receive her mother's hearty approval and permission to carry out her plan if possible.

At the next morning recess she drew Gertrude into a retired corner to communicate the important news.

"I told you things were to be different with you, Gertie," she said, "and mother says my plan may work — only I changed it a good deal after I first made it; but that 's no matter. Well, mother says it may work if I can get your consent, and she is going this afternoon to persuade your mother to let me do it, and I am going home with you after school, and mother will be there and we will talk it over all together. You shall have your hammock, and I shall have no end of fun trying to keep house and play nurse; and you *will* do it, won't you, Gertie?"

Margery paused, out of breath. That was the way she usually jumped right into the middle of anything she had to tell. Gertrude opened her brown eyes wider than usual and fixed them wonderingly on Margery's eager face.

"Will I do what, Margie? 'Please elucidate,' as Professor Proper says."

A little bubbling laugh burst from Margery's lips and rippled over her round, dimpled face.

"What a goose I am!" she said. "I have not told you a single thing about it, and here I am talking as though you had known it all along; but that's just like me. Mother says I always expect her to know what is in my mind by intuition — I think that is what she calls it. I do wish people would n't use so many big words. It keeps me half my time on the way to the dictionary, for mother insists that I look them up myself; she says I shall remember them better if I do" —

"Margery," interrupted Gertrude, speaking with mock solemnity, "do you mean to kill me with suspense?"

"No, indeed, you dear old girl! I don't mean to kill you at all, but only to make you live a good deal longer than you will if I don't help you. Listen, now; this is my plan, and don't you dare object! You remember I told you we were going to grandpa Burney's for two months, mamma and the children and I? Well, instead of its being mamma and the children and *I*, it is to be mamma and the children and you" —

"But, Margie, I cannot possibly" —

"Don't interrupt me, please," putting her hand playfully upon Gertrude's mouth. "I know just what you are going to say — that you cannot leave your mother — and we 've planned for that. So, as I was saying, you are to go into the country with mamma and the children, and I am going to stay with your mother and help her in your place. There, now, won't that be the jolliest fun you ever had? It will be for me, anyway. I 'm crazy to learn to cook and keep house, and I do so much want a chance to work off this unnecessary flesh! Of course I don't know how as well as you do, but I can easily learn; and I 've got one advantage over you, anyway — I 'm *strong* and never was sick a day in my life, only when I had measles and whooping cough, and then nurse could hardly keep me in the house. Just you trust your mother to me, Gertie, and see if I let her get tired out."

While Margery had been rushing on in this headlong fashion, Gertrude had stood motionless, surprise, pleasure, gratitude, and doubt contending for the mastery of her features. Doubt had the ascendency, and when Margery finally paused to see how Gertrude took it, she saw her friend looking at her with sober incredulity. Her countenance fell.

"Well, what do you think of it, Gertie? Don't you like it?"

"What do I think of it? I think it is just like your sweet, generous little self, Margery, to plan it; but it is a very queer thing for us to do, and I don't believe it would be best."

"Some queer things are right things," said Margery decisively; "but there is the bell, and we must go in. We 'll settle it all right when I go home with you to-night."

And so they did. No need to weary the "gentle reader" with all the long discussion that took place in Mrs. Morgan's plain little sitting room. No need to tell of all the lions that she and Gertrude saw in the way. Suffice it to say that they were slain one by one with a tact that was Mrs.

Mayne's own God-given gift, and that in the gathering twilight she and Margery walked quietly home, saying little to each other, but each busy with her own thoughts, and the feeling of a new tie between them — undefined perhaps, but no less real — the tie that unites "laborers together with God."

"What do you think of it, Gertrude?" said Mrs. Morgan, as the door closed upon their guests and they turned back into the gathering shadows of their little room.

"I think, mamma," said Gertrude slowly, "that Mrs. Mayne and Margery are the two oddest and best people that I know; I cannot decide which is the queerer — Margery for thinking of it, or her mother for letting her do it. And I also think that if I don't try my best to make things pleasant for Mrs. Mayne, and save up quantities of strength for next year, I shall be the most ungrateful girl alive. I am afraid, too, that in spite of her enthusiasm Margie will find she has undertaken more than she imagines."

"I shall try to make it as easy for her as possible."

"I know you will, mamma, and that is why I fear it will be too hard for you. No one can know as I do just what needs to be done for you. I cannot make it seem — in spite of their kindness — that I ought to go."

"But I really wish you to go, Gertrude, and I am sure, for my sake, you will do it, and try to be as happy as possible. If you worry, you will not rest."

And so all parties considered the affair settled.

## CHAPTER IV.

### AN UNEXPECTED TURN OF AFFAIRS.

BUT three weeks now remained until the school vacation. Both girls had been so absorbed in examinations and preparations for what to each promised to be the most unique experience of her life that they had seen little of each other. Occasional humorous references, on Margery's part, to what she proposed doing when she was Gertrude and Gertrude was she, showed that she had no notion of withdrawing from the compact, and Gertrude took comfort amid all her misgivings in the thought that Margery seemed so happy in her plan. If Margery had really any misgivings in regard to her scheme, any regrets for what she had promised to do, they vanished entirely when she saw how the first approach of summer heat told on Gertrude's strength. No doubt, since she had fallen to watching so closely, she magnified the evil in her own mind; but it was certainly true that Gertrude's step became more and more languid, and lately she had noted a feverish flush on her cheek during the last few hours in the schoolroom, and had thought her hands felt hot and dry when occasionally she had touched them. One morning, too, Gertrude had come in rather late, flushed from rapid walking, and on taking her seat had been seized with such a violent fit of coughing that Margery was thoroughly alarmed.

The offer of her car tickets had not yet been made. Someway she feared to offend Gertrude; but she herself had taken to walking, so that she had accumulated quite a little store. It was one of Dr. Mayne's odd notions to buy a certain quantity at once, and distribute them regularly to the family, never omitting the servants. To them it was his only gift. He did not believe much in gifts. He was wont to say that people who lavished presents most freely on their servants did so to eke out scanty wages. Margery took her tickets and said nothing, secretly hoping that the way might open for her to offer them to Gertrude. She resolved now to make her accept them at all hazards.

"See here, Gertie," she said after school that night, taking out of her pocket a generous packet of fares, "see how these have accumulated on my hands. Papa insists on giving me a certain number every week, and since this lovely spring weather has come on I have really preferred walking to riding. You have such a long distance to walk, and you would really do me a favor to take them off my hands. I am afraid I shall lose them if you don't."

Offered in this way, Gertrude could do no less than accept them as a lady should.

"Thank you so much, Margie," she said, smiling; "since I have owned to being so tired I may as well tell you frankly that I shall take a lazy delight in riding these out for you."

That was all she said, but her eyes looked much more and she kissed her friend good-night, a very unusual thing for her to do. She was not a demonstrative girl. Margery went home happier that night than she had been for many a day, and after that hoarded her tickets as if they had been so much gold. And now she fell to not only watching Gertrude's face, but listening for her cough. No doctor could scrutinize a patient with more anxiety. And she noticed that the slightest exertion brought it on — not often in such paroxysms as she had first noticed, but an obstinate little hacking that jarred on her alert ears. Since she had noticed this, time seemed to drag wonderfully. It seemed to her that vacation would never come, and she feared Gertrude would be seriously ill before the longed-for time arrived. She resolved to speak to her father about it that very night, and see if something ought not to be done for her. When she entered the family sitting room, her father and mother and brother were in earnest talk on some subject of interest; but so absorbed was Margery in her own thoughts that, in her characteristic fashion, she plunged at once into her own subject.

"Papa," she said, "I am so worried about Gertie. She coughs dreadfully, and looks so pale every morning and so flushed every night that I am afraid she is really ill. I thought perhaps something ought to be done."

Dr. Mayne frowned.

"Yes, something ought to be done. I happened to be in the horse car with her the other day, and I noticed that a few steps that she had to run to catch the car set her to coughing quite violently and I did not like the sound of it either. I asked her how long she had been coughing that way, and she answered hastily that it was only a little cold; and of course, as there were other passengers in the car, I could not press the subject. I was glad, however, that they had the good sense to spend a little money on car fares. So few poor people are willing to see any economy in saving strength. They would rather pay out their money in doctor's bills and bad medicine."

Margery flushed and smiled, but said nothing.

"That plan of yours to give her a little run into the country," continued the doctor, "would have been just the thing for her, and I am very sorry, daughter, that anything should happen to break it up."

"To break it up!" cried Margery aghast. "Surely, papa, nothing must do that! Why, I am just counting the days, and hoping she will live till school is out!"

"Extravagant in speech as ever, Margery," said Dr. Mayne, smiling in spite of his troubled face. "No, Gertrude is not so bad as that. Still she does need a change very seriously. But we were discussing a change in our plans for the summer when you came in. We have decided to take the long-planned trip to the Rocky Mountains. We shall be off for Colorado in three or four weeks at the longest."

"To Colorado!" cried Margery excitedly.

"Why, is n't that the very thing for her? Is not Colorado the place where people take all their coughs and hemorrhages and such things?"

"Yes, to be sure, child; but how is Gertrude to go? It is a long way off and the trip an expensive one. I am truly sorry to disappoint Gertrude and her mother, but they must take the will for the deed this time, and, under the circumstances, they cannot blame you. It is not your fault that we see fit to carry you off to Colorado this summer."

"But I don't see, papa, how going to Colorado makes any difference. If Gertie and I are to exchange places this summer, it certainly won't cost any more to take her than it will me. And just think what a lovely trip for her!"

"Was ever a clearer case of monomania than this?" said Dr. Mayne, laughing. "The child is so thoroughly imbued with the idea of Gertrude that she is deaf to all else, and even the wonders of the Rockies have lost their charms for her. Don't you see, my child, that this change in our plans puts a very different light on the subject?"

"Don't you see, dear," interposed Mrs. Mayne, speaking now for the first time, "that we could not go to Colorado without you?"

"No, mamma, I don't see it," said Margery stoutly. "If you can go to grandma Burney's without me, you can go to Colorado without me; and if I can take Gertrude's place for two months while she is on the farm, I can do it while she is two months in Colorado."

"Come, come, Kit!" exclaimed Harry, pulling mischievously at her nearest curl, "I say that is carrying things too far. Of course self-denial 's a very good thing and all that, and 'sweet charity' in moderate doses is invigorating to the moral constitution; but when it comes to going such lengths as you suggest — why, of course you don't expect us to believe you are in earnest."

"But I am in earnest," said Margery, flushing, "and I wish you would not make fun of me. And if you loved Gertrude half as well as I do, you would be in earnest too."

"Maybe I do," said Harry mockingly, "only I 've a different way of showing it."

Mrs. Mayne had said of Margery when she was a small child that she was usually very yielding, with the acquiescence born of indifference; but that when an idea really took possession of her, her tenacity to it was something remarkable. It was plain that the idea of substituting for Gertrude now thoroughly possessed her and her resolution would not be easily shaken. Nor did she feel really certain that it ought to be shaken. She must have time to think. So again she parleyed with the issue.

"Never mind, Margery," she said; "your plan shall not be given up till we have reconsidered it in the light of our new arrangement. But it may be that Mrs. Morgan and Gertrude would not consent to her going so far away, even if we were willing to spare you, and you were willing to stay."

"I hope they will be willing, mamma. We will see them about it to-morrow, and I am sure I shall be willing to stay if you will let me."

Half an hour later, alone in her own room, she did not feel quite so sure of her willingness to stay. She would not have been a natural girl if the thought of the tour to the Rockies held no temptation for her. But love for Gertrude and desire to do good, fortified no doubt by that natural tenacity of which her mother was aware, won the day. She did not confide her waverings even to her mother, and having once more settled it in her own mind, her natural buoyancy of spirit asserted itself, and she longed only for the time to come when she could see the travelers on their way and settle down to the novel routine of a poor widow's daughter. Of course you know she had her way or this story would never have been written. Gertrude's cough carried the day, against all opposition, with her mother, and even Dr. Mayne felt proud of his daughter and rather glad of her decision.

"I 'll show you, Kit," whispered Harry mischievously in her ear, as, with Gertrude's shawl strap in his hand, he kissed his sister good-by and stepped aboard the west-bound train. "I 'll show you whether I love Gertrude as well as you do or not; but you 're a brick, Margie, if I do say it."

With waving of hands and brave attempts at smiling from all the party within, the train moved slowly out, and Margery stood alone on the platform, alone in a crowd of people bent each upon his own plans and regardless of his neighbor. So at least it seemed to her as she elbowed her way to the hack stand and, seating herself in the nearest vacant one, gave the driver Mrs. Morgan's street and number, and was driven rapidly out to begin her strange vacation.

For a moment the loneliness of it nearly overwhelmed her, and it was with difficulty that she fought back her tears. The thought of Gertrude's mother helped her. It would never do, she said, to let her think she regretted what she had done. So she made a brave effort to look on the bright side of it, and by the time the hack stopped at the cottage door she wore her brightest smile and ran gayly up the steps and into the room where Mrs. Morgan sat, trying to sew and be unconcerned.

Stepping in front of her chair, Margery made a little mock courtesy, and with an "At your service, ma'am!" began drawing off her gloves with an air of being quite at home. Mrs. Morgan smiled faintly, and saying, "I hope it will not be dull for you here, Margery," motioned her to a chair by her side; and the two were soon engaged in earnest talk about the travelers.

Mrs. Mayne had wanted Margery to take leave of them at her own home and go directly to Mrs. Morgan's without seeing them off. But Margery had insisted on accompanying them to the depot.

"If I leave you here," she said, "I shall feel all the time as though I had only to walk home to see you — and I should be twice as homesick as I shall to see the cars carry you away. For then I shall *feel* you are gone and know there is no help for it."

Margery's real farewell to mother had been in her own room the night before, where Mrs. Mayne had come after she was in bed, and sitting by her side in the moonlight, holding Margery's hand in hers, they had talked far into the night. When at last she kissed her good-night, Mrs. Mayne slipped a packet of cards in her hand.

"They are texts for you, my darling; one for each day while I am gone. I wrote them out in my own hand because I thought you would like them better so."

Margery had slipped them under her pillow and gone quietly to sleep, sober and yet happy. On the morning of her first day at Mrs. Morgan's she would read the first one.

# CHAPTER V.

## THE FIRST DAY AT MRS. MORGAN'S.

I WISH Gertie was here to sew this button on my waist and find me another pair of stockings. This one has a great hole in the knee, and mamma 'll scold like everything if I put it on so. Oh, dear! I should think there was everything in this drawer *but* stockings. I 'm going to ask mamma to come and help."

"No, indeed, you don't, Fred; mamma 's busy getting breakfast, and I heard her say this morning that Mrs. Hall's dress must be done to-day 'whether or no.' Those were her very words. She has to have the money to pay the coal man when he comes in the morning, or he won't unload the coal. She looks just about sick this morning, too — and she told me to hurry up and come and help her."

"Well, why don't you hurry, then, and stop talking cross to me? You 've only got on one stocking, and you got up first, too. I 'll beat you yet if I can *only* find some stockings. I don't see what Gertie wanted to go off for anyway. I don't b'lieve that stuck-up rich girl 'll help mamma very much. Bob Stark says she only just wants to come prying around to see how we live, and show off her fine clothes ; and Maggie Dart said : 'A heap of work she 'd do with them white hands, all tricked out with rings.' "

"Well, one thing 's sure : we 've just got to rustle for ourselves mornings, for of course Miss Margery won't get up early as we do. Gertie said we must n't expect that, because she was n't used to it ; and we are big enough to dress ourselves anyway — and we must try to make it easy for her and be good boys. Oh, dear ! I get so tired of being told to 'be good boys,' don't you, Fred ? I wish there was n't any such thing as a 'good boy' in the whole world, and then I should n't have to try to be one."

"So do I, Walter. Oh, *me!* I just *can't* get any stockings, and I want to beat you dressing."

"Well, I know one thing you can do — you can make a big mess of that drawer. Just look at it now ! See how you 've tumbled things all out on the floor. You 'll catch it when mamma comes in, won't you now ?"

"I don't care. Gertie says you 're a poke, and you have n't got your other stocking on yet.

'Deedle, deedle dumpling, my son John—
One stocking off and one stocking on!'"

"Hush up!"

"Boys!" The voice that spoke from the kitchen was not exactly cross, not exactly stern, not exactly querulous, but a mixture of all three. It was a burdened, discouraged voice.

"*Boys!*" it called again, this time louder.

"Ma'am?" responded Walter.

"Mem?" echoed Fred.

"Do stop quarreling and dress yourselves quickly. At this rate I shall not get to sewing before nine o'clock, and I must finish that dress to-day."

This was the conversation that Margery distinctly heard as she stood in her little bedroom on that first morning, hurrying on her clothes. She had been awakened from a sound sleep by what seemed to her half-aroused senses a sound of muffled thunder, but proved in reality to be only Walter and Fred tumbling out of bed and chasing each other barefooted over the sitting room floor. As nearly always happens when one wakes for the first time in a strange place, it had taken her some minutes to realize where she was. Then she felt such a strange stupor upon her that she was about to turn over for another nap when the sound of voices arrested her, and presently she heard her own name in the conversation just related. Hearing the boys wish for Gertie roused her suddenly to a sense of her new duties, and she sprang hastily out of bed, resolved to dispatch her toilet as quickly as possible. On the foot of her bed lay the dressing gown which she had mechanically placed there on retiring. She had been accustomed to put it over her night clothes when she ran across the hall to the bathroom for her morning bath. She took it up hastily now, and then laid it as quickly down, with a comic gesture of dismay. There was no bathroom to go to! What was she to do, then? How get her bath? She looked around the room — not far to look, certainly. The room was eight feet by ten. There was just barely space for the bedstead and a small stand on which stood the kerosene lamp, a pincushion, a little china matchbox, a brush and comb, and Margery's Bible, which she had laid there on finishing her chapter before retiring the night before; together with her trunk, which stood in the corner opposite the stand, and occupied much more space, and, almost wedged in between the two, a low wooden chair cushioned with chintz. Margery did not know how much time and thought Gertrude had expended on this room to make it comfortable for her. She did not know that Gertrude had worked late evenings at crocheting to earn money to buy the cheap cotton ingrain which covered the floor; that she had borrowed a saw from one of her carpenter neighbors and herself sawed the legs off a high wooden chair to make it low enough for Margery, and then added the bright chintz cushion tied on with the only red ribbons she possessed; that she had humbled her pride and bought cheap cotton instead of lisle for her traveling gloves that she might purchase the fresh scrim curtain for the one window of the room; that for the fresh calcimine overhead and the pretty, cheap paper on the walls she had promised to crochet for her neighbor, the paper hanger's wife, yards and yards of a certain fine lace she coveted, while she was away on her travels. She did not know how, with weary hands and aching back, she had herself washed the window and scrubbed the paint, tacked down the carpet, and placed the scanty furniture, in odd moments of time she could snatch from school and home duties. If she had known I think the little room would have looked to Margery that morning like a fairy palace instead of the pitiful, plain thing that it really was. No; she did not know. She only thought she was occupying Gertrude's room just as she had left it, and that it was like Gertrude to keep it so neat and clean.

But what to do about the bath? The door into the sitting room was just opposite the bed with a space between barely large enough to stand and dress. By the head of the bed, however, was another small door evidently opening into some sort of closet.

Perhaps here were the desired accommodations for toilet. Margery timidly opened the door — just a tiny little closet, scarcely large enough to turn around in, with empty hooks awaiting her clothes. There was no help for it — she must do without her bath this morning; and oh! how she wanted it! for, almost unheard-of thing to Margery, her head ached and she felt tired and languid. She longed for the cool water, and wondered what ailed her. Accustomed to her large, airy chamber, with its modern ventilators, she did not know what effect it would have on her to sleep in an eight-by-ten low-ceiled room, with door and window closed, on a warm June night. No wonder her head ached. She began putting on her clothes in no enviable frame of mind, which frame of mind was not particularly improved by the unkind comments of Gertrude's brothers and their neighbors, the plain-spoken Bob Stark and Maggie Dart: "Stuck-up rich girl!" "Show off her fine clothes!" "White hands tricked out with rings!" Each one of these phrases stung like a nettle. This, then, was the sort of thanks she had to expect from these rude boys. For a moment she felt resentful, and almost resolved to put on the prettiest dress she had, just for spite; but just then she saw the little packet of text-cards lying unopened on the stand. These spoke to her of her mother, and the tears sprang quickly to her eyes as she drew her plainest brown gingham from her trunk and hastily put it on. Mother had told her not to be discouraged, even if sometimes she did not seem to be appreciated.

Now came Mrs. Morgan's tired voice. Margery's hand was on the door, and she hastily brushed back the tears. Stop! she must look at mother's morning text — her first morning of all others. She tore off the wrapper and took up the first card. They were laid in the order in which they were to be used : —

"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."

Margery's face brightened. Sure enough, it was for the Lord and not men she was trying to do this ; and how foolish for her to mind what these silly little children said ! She would do her work so heartily that they would soon have a different opinion of her, that was all. Just one moment more — she had almost forgotten her morning prayer. Then she went out with a face cheery in spite of headache.

"Good morning, boys !" she said brightly. "What, nearly dressed ? Why, you had almost beaten me ! What is it, Fred ? Can I help you ?"

"It 's these horrid things that won't go back in the drawer" — giving vigorous pokes to a tumbled mass of half-folded clothes. "I had to get a pair of stockings and of course everything was on top — it always is, you know."

"Yes," said Margery, laughing, "that 's the way it seems to me when I want anything from my drawers ; but I 'll tell you what I 've found out, Fred. It is easier to take them out carefully all folded and then to lay them back so than to tumble them up and have to fold them over again. But did you find the stockings?"

"Yes 'm; but I wanted to get these things back before mother comes."

"I 'll put them back, Fred, while you put on the stockings. I 'm glad you 've learned to leave them off as soon as they have holes in. It will make my mending so much easier."

"Are you going to mend our stockings for us?" asked Walter.

"Yes, of course. Gertrude did it when she was here, did n't she? And I am going to try to do everything she did, if I can."

"Do you know how to mend stockings?" pursued Walter, somewhat incredulously.

"Oh, yes! I always do my own, and sometimes I do them for Ted and Dot."

"Why, Maggie Dart said you could n't do anything but play the piano — she calls it *pianner*," broke in Fred.

"Well, you see, Maggie did not know. But come, we must hurry, or breakfast will be ready before we are. I smell the coffee now. That 's right; now, Walter, if you will show me where I can wash I will be ready to brush your hair by the time you button your shoes."

"There 's a washstand right in the kitchen. Mother 'll show you," said Walter; "but I can't find a button hook."

"Here is one," said Margery. "I almost always have one in my pocket to lend to Ted and Dot."

"Who 's Ted and Dot?" queried Fred.

"They are my little brother and sister. Ted is six years old and Dot is four."

"Do you help them dress?"

"Sometimes; not always. But come, we must not talk or we shall be late." And Margery disappeared in the kitchen.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Morgan," she said pleasantly. "I am a little late, I fear; but you must call me when you get up. You know we are rather lazy at home. Papa is often out late at night and likes to sleep in the morning. I like to get up early if I can only wake — especially in summer time. Walter said I should find a place to wash here."

"Yes, over in that corner; we have to all wash in one place. Our bedrooms are too small for toilet accommodations. I am afraid it will seem inconvenient to you."

"Oh, no," said Margery. "It will make me seem more like one of the family. Why, how nice you have it fixed here — a real little bathroom!"

The corner was separated from the rest of the room by a large folding screen, and here Margery found everything necessary to her toilet. Cheap and plain but scrupulously neat seemed the order of this small house.

And now breakfast was on the table, and Walter and Fred came rushing out, trying who should be first at the washstand. Margery was there to help them.

"I did n't get my button sewed on," said Fred.

"Never mind," said Margery. "We will do that after breakfast. We must not keep your mamma waiting. To-morrow we will have an earlier start."

The kitchen was a fair-sized room, and well that it was, since it must serve the threefold purpose of toilet, kitchen, and dining room. The morning was warm, but door and windows were open and a fresh breeze blew across the breakfast table, which stood removed as far as possible from the stove. Mrs. Morgan took the folding screen and with it shut from sight as well as feeling the cook stove, with all its appurtenances; and, presto! a tidy dining room.

"If I have learned nothing else to-day," wrote Margery in the diary which she had promised to keep for her mother, "I have at least learned the value of screens."

The breakfast of oatmeal, bread and butter and coffee Margery thought delicious, though the omission of the "grace before meat" struck her strangely.

"You must tell me," she said, as they rose from the table, "just how you plan your morning work. I am like that big Irish girl that came to mamma for a place, and said, showing a brawny, not overly clean arm,—'I 's stout an' willin', ma'am, but not *wonted* yet;' which meant, mamma said, that she was fresh from the fields of the Emerald Isle and did n't know the first principles of housework."

"I usually get breakfast while Gertrude attends to the children's dressing and does the sitting room work. Then it is all ready for me to sew in as soon as breakfast is over; and she attends to the rest of the work during the day; but of course you cannot do all that."

"I shall try," said Margery. "I don't believe after all I am quite as ignorant as the Irish girl was, but I was thinking of the 'stout an' willin'' part. Now I must get a big apron, and then for some fun. I can sweep and dust nicely — mamma taught me herself. I always take care of my own room and sometimes of the parlor and nursery when nurse is out or has one of her headaches. By the way, if you will show me some time to-day where the boys' clothes are kept, and what they wear for every day, and so on, I can take that part off your hands easily; mending and all.'

"You have a wise mother, Margery; many women of her means would let a daughter grow up to scorn such work."

"I am glad mamma did n't do so with me, for then I could never have let Gertrude go; and I 'm so glad we did it! Are n't you?"

"I shall try to be. Yes, I really am; only you know, Margery, it 's the first time in her life she was ever away from me a single night — and — I feel it."

Margery wanted to say, "Just as I miss mamma," but she had made a solemn resolve not to let such a word pass her lips no matter how often the thought came to her mind; so she only said cheerily: —

"Yes, I know; but we will get used to it soon, and the two months will just fly away; we shall be so busy."

Margery went to her bedroom for the apron. When she opened the door, the close, ill-smelling air fairly stifled her.

"Ugh!" she said, "the idea of a doctor's daughter and a graduate from the public school hygiene sleeping in such an atmosphere as that! No wonder I felt cross and headachy this morning."

She threw the window wide open.

"There!" she said, "that is the way you shall stay nights after this, burglars or no burglars." Then she laughed. "I don't believe burglars will want anything in this little box of a house anyhow."

Then she tied on a big gingham apron, put on a sweeping cap and began putting the sitting room to rights. The task was soon accomplished, and she went in search of Mrs. Morgan. She found her in the pantry stirring something in a wooden bowl.

"Your room is ready now," said Margery, "and you can get right to sewing if you wish. I will take charge of things out here. I shall have to bother you a good deal at first, of course, to find out how things are, and how you like them done; but when I need help for this I will come and ask you, and you need not worry about the housekeeping. Cannot I finish what you are doing now?"

"It is finished for the present, thank you. I am setting bread to rise. Did you ever make bread?"

"No, ma'am; but I 've seen Betty knead it and make it into loaves. She used to let me watch her cook a good deal. If you will tell me when this is light enough to mix, I think I can finish it."

"Very well, you may try it; and now, since I have some important work to finish, I will go to my sewing. But you must promise to let me know when things go wrong or are too hard for you. Will you, child?"

"Yes 'm, I 'll tell you; but before you go, tell me, please, what is to be done after the dishes are washed and the kitchen in order — there are the bedrooms, of course, and then what?"

"Nothing about the house, I believe, until dinner time. We have dinner at half-past twelve. The boys get so hungry that we have early dinners: I do not like to have them lunch. Gertrude usually gets in an hour or so of mending or sewing before dinner, but you will hardly be able to do that — not at first anyway. Oh, yes! there are the lamps to clean and fill some time to-day. The oil can is in the corner of the coal house. Walter will show you."

With that she went to her sewing, and Margery took charge of her new domain.

It is not my purpose to treat you to a chapter of sour bread, burned meats, and ludicrous blunders in housewifery, worthy the ignorant and untutored daughter of Erin. Margery was a bright girl and had been taught to use eyes and ears. She inherited a good stock of common sense, of that very useful species called "mother-wit," and I am forced to record that she performed her day's duties in very creditable fashion, and in what seemed to Mrs. Morgan very reasonable time, considering it was her first day. The important dress was finished, and delivered by Walter, who, young as he was, was developing into a very trusty errand boy; and Mrs. Morgan and Margery found time for a pleasant twilight chat before it was bedtime for the boys. The work of the next day was planned and discussed.

By a sort of tacit consent little was said of the travelers, both perhaps feeling it dangerous ground while the separation was so new. And while they sat by the open door enjoying the cool evening breeze and listening to the distant, confused hum of city notes, Gertrude lay idly back upon the cushions of her palace car and wondered if she were dreaming or if she were the real old-fashioned Cinderella, and whether the prince would not soon appear with the glass slipper in hand. But no prince appeared — only Harry, with the last magazine, a big Japanese fan, a box of caramels, two oranges, and a bag of peanuts, which he emptied in one confused heap into Gertrude's lap.

"Is that all?" she said, laughing.

"No," answered Harry gravely; "I have one thing more, but it is such a tender relic of the past that I would not profane it by contact with grosser things; something on the order of the 'last rose of summer,' you know;" and he drew from his pocket a little withered banana, to which was tied a card bearing the lines: —

Only a small banana,
  But it speaks of a bygone day,
When in luscious strings they hung and swung
  At the grocer's over the way.

Only a small banana,
But I know when a small boy I
Would cheerfully have ran a
Whole mile one such to buy.

Margery would have laughed and said, "What a nonsensical boy you are, Harry!" but Gertrude took it in her hand, read the inscription, and then laid it carefully on the window-sill, saying, with a mock sigh of relief: —

"How thankful I am, Harry, that you did n't say anything tragic about the skin!"

And then the porter came in and lighted the lamps, and in the Morgan cottage it had been lamp-lighting time for half an hour or more, and the boys were coming noisily up the walk to the door, closing the gate behind them with a bang, and Margery was pulling out the bed lounge where they slept and wondering if they liked stories as well as Ted and Dot.

## CHAPTER VI.

### SUNDAY.

MARGERY'S first day in her adopted home fell on a Wednesday. Thursday and Friday passed by with little to distinguish them from their predecessors, except, perhaps, that she became better accustomed to the routine of duties, and made both boys her fast friends. Children, if won at all, are usually soon won. When, therefore, on the second morning, Margery was dressed and ready to help, before they were up, meeting them with her bright smile and hearty good-morning, questioning them about their plays and their plans for the day, sewing on missing buttons, and producing whole stockings with as much skill and alacrity as did Gertrude, their respect for her began to grow rapidly. And when during the day she found time to help Walter make a kite, and to teach Fred to play marbles when his brother had given him up as a dull scholar, both boys were quite won over. She even had the pleasure of hearing Fred say to the inquisitive

Maggie Dart (who proved to be their next-door neighbor, and spent much time hanging over the line fence to watch the boys at their play):—

"I don't care what you say about Margery, she's jolly if she is rich, and she ain't 'stuck up' neither, and she knows how to do lots of things. Why, she can even make kites and play marbles! And we like her just as well as Gertrude, don't we, Walter?"

And Walter responded, "Bet you we do! and the first boy says anything mean about her'd better look out."

Saturday proved a very busy day. In Margery's home it had always been a day of preparation for the Sabbath. Everything possible was done to make the next day's duties light for servants as well as the other members of the family. Margery found it different here. Mrs. Morgan had extra sewing to finish for delivery that afternoon, and Margery helped her an hour or two with that. There was also a jacket for Walter and trowsers for Fred to be finished off. At the last moment it was found that the stocking drawer was empty, and a pair for each of the boys must be washed and mended. And so one little extra after another appeared, until, when supper time came, Margery thought she had never been so tired in her life; and still there had been no extra cooking done for the Sabbath, the boys had not had their weekly bath, and she had not even looked at her Sunday-school lesson.

The thought of her Sunday-school lesson presented a new problem. Her mind had been so filled by her new and strange duties that she had thought nothing about the coming Sabbath and how it would be spent at the cottage. Could she go to Sunday-school as usual? Did she wish to go? These questions came so suddenly upon her that she felt dismayed. She seemed now, for the first time since she had seen the railway train, bearing its precious freight, puff slowly out of the depot, to realize that she was in the same city with all her accustomed surroundings. Until now she had felt as though she too had taken a journey. Now it all came back upon her, and she felt the strangeness of her situation as she had never done before. Just to think of it! She had only to walk two blocks, hail a street car, and in less than half an hour she could alight at the door of her own home. She could run up the broad stone steps, ring the bell, and Nancy, the maid, would answer with just such a broad smile of welcome as always greeted her when she came home from a visit to grandma or aunt Louise. She could go up the familiar oak staircase, across the broad hall, and open the door of her own pretty room. Everything would be just as she had left it. The dainty bed with its lace-trimmed coverings, the soft, gray carpet strewn with fern leaves, the filmy lace curtains at the windows, the dressing table with its numberless pretty trifles for use and ornament, the set of low bookshelves where reposed her favorite volumes of romance and travel, together with last year's schoolbooks and her writing desk, mamma's last birthday gift. Ah! but mamma! She could easily cross to her room, and there too every article of furniture would stand in its accustomed place; but mother would not be there. She could follow on to the nursery: perfect quiet and order would reign; no gay laughter, no sound of romping feet would greet her ears as she neared the door. Mother would not be there, nurse would not be there, neither would Ted and Dot. Playthings would be laid away, chairs set back, and everything look lonesome and unused. Down then to the library: rows and rows of books quietly gathering dust, papa's study chair set stiffly on one side the secretary, mamma's low rocker on the other. She could put aside the crimson curtain that separated papa's little office from the library: nothing but shelves of medical books, rows and rows of bottles, waste basket yawning empty under the office desk. Then she could cross the hall into the sitting room, into the parlor, into the dining room: quiet and order everywhere; on into the kitchen: there at last she should find signs of life. Good old Betty would be there; there Nancy would have retired after answering the door, to give news of her coming; but even here would be the same unusual quiet, just the two servants keeping house for themselves. All the loneliness of it rushed over her in one great wave of homesickness. One thing was certain: she could not go in sight of home. What about Sunday-school and church? Could she take her accustomed place in class and face all the inquisitive looks from the girls, who knew her family was out of town? Could she answer their well-meant questions and explain to them her situation? Worse than all, could she bear when Sunday-school was over to take her place in the family pew, and watch in vain for father, mother, and Harry to come? No, no, no! She must make her isolation as perfect as possible, must not go near her usual haunts, until the two months had passed and she was at home again. But Sunday with no church or Sunday-school when she was well and able to go — would that be right? What would mamma think of it? She wished she knew.

A sudden thought came to her. There were other churches in the city where she was not known. Mamma would be worshiping in a strange place to-morrow — so might she. She did not know where Mrs. Morgan went to church. She would ask her. There was a little mission church three or four blocks away — service at one o'clock, Sunday-school at three. Just the thing, "and quite suited to my station," she told herself, with a little laugh. In spite of her homesickness, Margery would see the funny side of things. So she fell to planning for the morrow — what would be suitable to wear, what the minister would be like. Should she have to go alone, or would Mrs. Morgan or the boys go with her? And soon the keen edge of homesickness wore off, and when Mrs. Morgan came back from her shopping supper was on the table, the boys washed and combed and listening to one of her stories, and she herself showed no trace of the perplexity she had just been in.

When Margery awoke next morning the sun was shining full and bright into her bedroom window. She heard the voices of Walter and Fred in the next room, and knew from their conversation that they were dressing. It must be very late, was her thought as she sprang up hastily. Then she remembered that it was Sunday morning, and no doubt the Morgans, in common with most people, — working people especially — indulged in later hours than usual on that day. With this thought in mind she allowed herself to dress more leisurely, and spend more time over mother's morning text. How these texts strengthened her for each day's duty! It seemed to her that her mother must have known beforehand what each day's trial and perplexity would be, so well did each verse suit her present need. No, Margery, she only knew *you*, and knew the Bible well, and had practically tested the comfort and strength in each text she so carefully prepared. This morning it was from the One Hundred and Eighteenth Psalm: —

> This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

"Oh, the dear, dear mother!" whispered Margery to herself, laying down the card. "Did she guess that on Sunday of all days I should be tempted to be homesick and sad?" And if the quick tears sprang to her eyes they were not bitter tears, for she smiled brightly as she brushed them away and said again to herself, with a decisive shake of the head, "We *will* 'rejoice and be glad' in spite of everything, won't we, mother dear?" Thus fortified, she went out to meet the boys.

"I just hate Sunday," said Walter, and he jerked a button off his shoe as if to emphasize his dislike.

"I just hate Sunday, too," echoed Fred.

"But why?" asked Margery cheerily, not acting the least bit shocked.

"Oh, it's such a half-and-half day!" said Walter.

"I think it's a whole *long* day," put in Fred; "but that's so; a half and a half does make a whole one, don't it, Margery?" triumphant over his arithmetical feat.

"Yes, it does, Fred," said Margery, laughing; "but why do you call it a half-and-half day, Walter?"

"Oh, it's sort of half work and half play—half fun, you know, with so many things that are n't proper for Sunday, and not much that is proper — only to stay round the yard and think up fun for next week, and get tired and wish it was over."

"Yes, I do wish 't was over," said little echo again.

"But I don't," said Margery. "And we won't have any 'half-and-half' day to-day, boys. We 'll just have a whole happy Sunday, see if we don't. I love Sunday. I always did."

"When you was little like us?"

"Yes, when I was little like you; and Ted and Dot love Sunday dearly — and I think it 's strange you don't. It must be you do not manage it right some way; but we 'll see what we can do with it."

"What made you love Sunday when you was little?" queried Walter.

"Why, I don't know as I can exactly tell. I never thought what made me, only I always did. I guess we did nicer things on Sunday than any other day."

"What did you do?"

"What did we do? Well, let me think. In the first place, we had a longer, nicer breakfast than on any other day. We children always had chocolate to drink Sunday morning out of our pretty china cups, and other mornings we only had a glass of milk. Yes, and there were always flowers on the table for Sunday breakfast; and when I was old enough mamma used to let me gather them and put them in any vase I liked best. Harry used to laugh at me because I liked a big white china vase with flowers and gilt all over it. He said it was a cheap, common thing, and that I had very 'artistic taste,' but I did n't care. I did n't know what 'artistic' meant, and I thought the vase was pretty anyway" —

"But in winter you could n't have flowers," broke in Fred.

"Yes; from the conservatory. I was always glad when the time came for the hyacinths, but Ted and Dot like pink geraniums best. Harry likes heliotrope and roses. Then besides the chocolate and flowers, there was always something that we particularly liked to eat — currant buns or jelly roll, or something like that. No one was ever in a hurry at Sunday breakfast either. There was no school to get ready for at nine. Papa never kept office hours Sunday, and all the work that could be done beforehand was done Saturday. So we sat and talked and enjoyed our breakfast. On Sunday morning too we always went into the parlor for prayers — usually we had them in the dining room, just sat back from the table, you know — for papa was always in a hurry. But in the parlor Sunday morning there was plenty of time. Mamma played the piano and we sang a good deal, sometimes three or four hymns, and then the children repeated their texts for Sunday-school and we talked about the lesson. By the time prayers were over it was time to dress for Sunday-school. Sunday-school is at ten in our church. Everything was ready and it did not take long. Of course we liked Sunday-school — with the music and the papers and books and such *lovely* teachers. Who could help liking Sunday-school? Do you boys go to Sunday-school?"

Both shook their heads.

"No; never."

"Oh, that is too bad! Well, you must go. You don't know how nice it is. After Sunday-school came church. Sometimes that seemed long to us when we were too young to understand the sermon; but I liked the music always, and when I was very little mamma would sometimes let me lay my head in her lap and sleep till singing time came again. Then came Sunday lunch, and that was even nicer than breakfast. All our best silver and mamma's prettiest china, and fruit and flowers, nuts and candy, cake, sandwiches, everything that children liked, only not anything that had to be cooked on Sunday. In the winter we had tea to drink — we children did not have tea on week days — and in summer, lemonade, or some other iced drink. In the afternoon we had mamma all to ourselves in the parlor. We brought our Sunday-school books and papers there, and sat in the best chairs or curled up on the softest rugs, or mamma sat on the big sofa and we huddled round her and she read our books for us and told us stories from the Bible, all about Joseph and Samson and Samuel and Jonah and Daniel and David and all those interesting people; you 've heard them all, have n't you?"

Two more solemn shakes of the head.

"No; we never did. Mamma 's always so tired Sunday she can't have us bother her; and Gertrude says it 's the only chance she has to read, and so we have to look out for ourselves," said Walter.

"Yes, I know," said Margery gently; "your mother works very hard, and she does need rest. Do you think you should like my kind of a Sunday?"

"You better b'lieve I would," Walter responded.

"Yes, *sir!*" said Fred emphatically. "But we have n't got the things to have it with — the flowers and chocolate and lemonade and nice dishes."

"No, not exactly," said Margery, hesitating; "but you have enough to make a nice Sunday of, and we will try. Now hurry up the dressing, so that we can have breakfast over and begin. When you are dressed you can fold up your bed and put away your clothes, can't you? I will go now, and help your mother with the breakfast."

When Margery came back to call the boys to breakfast she found the little sitting room in very decent order, and found that, better still, the boys were so engaged with their new work that they had forgotten to quarrel with each other, or fret because it was Sunday.

"Does n't it look nice, Margery?" said Fred. "We did it all our own selves."

"Yes, indeed, Fred; two such big, stout boys as you and Walter could save mamma many steps, so that she would not always be so tired when

Sunday comes. Now, after breakfast, there will be only the dishes to wash, and the bedrooms to do up, and then we have the whole long day to do just what we please in."

"But mamma won't let us do just what we please."

"If you please to do right, she will. And it is just as easy to please to do right things as wrong things, if we only think so, and much pleasanter for us in the end."

"What church do you attend when you are able to go?" said Margery to Mrs. Morgan at the breakfast table.

"I never go."

"Does not Gertrude? Do not the boys sometimes?"

"No; never. I am always too tired to make the effort to go far — even if I cared to mingle with my old friends, which, under the circumstances, I do not care to do. Gertrude dislikes going alone and feels as I do about mingling with wealthy people. Perhaps we ought not to be conscious of our poverty, but we are."

"Yes, I know," said Margery carefully; "I suppose about most things I would feel just as you do. But it seems to me church and Sunday-school are among the necessities of life. I don't see how I could get along without them — that is, if I were able to go, of course."

"Perhaps not; but you know Gertrude and I are not church members. We do not feel as you do about these things."

"Oh, how I wish you did!"

Margery spoke impulsively. She did not really mean to say it — she only thought aloud. Mrs. Morgan made no reply for a time. At last she said: —

"Of course if our circumstances were different I should like to have the children go to Sunday-school, and Gertrude and I would enjoy attending church where we could listen to good preaching. Some of the finest lectures I have ever heard were from the pulpit, and I think it quite a proper way to spend the Sabbath. I know Sunday is a dull day here for the children; I will not have them run in the streets and indulge in rude, noisy plays on that day. That, to say the least, is not well-bred. Perhaps if I were stronger or had more leisure I could do more to amuse them. But you see how it is. Sunday is the only breathing spell Gertrude and I get, and we *must* rest." If Margery had known that the kitchen door was ajar, and that Mrs. Morgan sat near it paring potatoes while she talked to the boys of her happy Sundays at home, she would have better understood the half-apologetic tone in which she now spoke.

"Yes," assented Margery; "I see how it is. But if the boys went to Sunday-school, for instance, would it not help the day to pass more pleasantly for them, perhaps?"

"Very likely; but where could they go? They are too young to send alone to a strange place."

"Do none of the children in the neighborhood go to any Sunday-school?"

"Oh, yes, to the mission school — nearly all of them. But I cannot quite come to that. Send my children to a mission school among a lot of low-bred, ignorant people to be patronized by ladies who come to teach them and send tracts to their mothers, in the same spirit that we used to drop our pennies in the contribution box when we were children for the conversion of the poor, naked Hottentots! Ladies who teach them to be content with their station in life, and not envy the rich; who try to console them by telling them that Christ was a carpenter, and who know very well that when their carriages have rolled them back into the fashionable quarter where they live they would not be seen speaking to a carpenter on the street; ladies who a few years ago would have been proud to be on my calling list, but who would speak of me now as 'a very *worthy woman*, really much above her station in life, you know — so unfortunate to feel above one's surroundings'!"

Margery had not been prepared for this outburst. She was sorry she had mentioned the subject at all. She had heard her mother say that Mrs. Morgan felt her changed lot very keenly, and that she had lost none of her old pride and spirit. But she had never seen her in such a mood. Her cheeks were flushed and her eyes flashing. No one spoke for a moment. Margery was thinking rapidly. She had meant to go to this very mission chapel of which her friend spoke so bitterly, and she had meant to ask her leave to take the boys. But if their mother felt this way, how could she? Ought she to go herself? Would it be taken by Mrs. Morgan as a disregard of her feelings if she went? And she felt truly sorry for this poor, disheartened woman, who had no Christ to help her. What a hard, dreary life it must be! Was it true, what she had said of mission schools?

All this and more swept through her mind before she said timidly : —

"I did not know, I did not understand about it; I only thought the boys would like a change. I am sorry if I seemed inquisitive."

It was Mrs. Morgan's turn to be sorry now.

"No, no, child," she said; "you said nothing wrong. I was foolish to speak so to you. Of course you cannot understand. I hope you never may. I suppose these mission churches and schools are well enough in their way — for some classes maybe; but they are not for me."

"Did you ever go?"

"No, I never went to one."

"I went once with papa, down in the other part of the city. He had a class there. I thought it was very nice. The children were clean and neat, and the singing was lovely. They sang as if they enjoyed it so. I said that to papa, and he said perhaps it was because they had so little to enjoy. He said the mission school was all they had to look forward to during the week, some of them. I thought I should like to go again. I had thought of going this afternoon to the Tenth Street Chapel, it is so near here — that is, if you did not object."

"Certainly not. Go if you wish, by all means. Of course if I were a church member I should feel differently about such things. I should perhaps think it my duty."

"Can we go, mamma? We never go anywhere. Margery said we ought to go to Sunday-school. She says it is awful nice."

"I did n't say 'awful,' did I, Walter?" said Margery, laughing; "but I did say, Mrs. Morgan, that I thought they would like to go. I meant to ask you to let me take them, but of course I did not know how you felt about it."

"*Please*, mamma, let us go!" chimed in Fred. "Margery said we 'd have a nice Sunday, and I want to hear them sing 'Pull forth the shore.' Bob Stark sings it, and it 's just jolly. He learned it at Sunday-school, he says. Here 's the way it goes:" and, regardless of time and place, Fred broke forth: —

"Safe in the *live* boat, sailor,
Cling to *the shelf* no more,
Leave the poor old *strangled wretch*,
And pull *forth* the shore."

Fred sang with the spirit, if not the understanding, and by the time he had finished both his mother and Margery were laughing till the tears came.

"There, Fred," said the mother, controlling herself; "that will do for now. It is not proper to sing at the table, you know. No doubt Bob sings it as he understands it; and you sing it as you understand him; and between the two you get it a little mixed."

"Well, it's pretty, anyhow, and they sing lots more. *Please* let us go, mamma! we'll be ever so good."

"Oh, if Margery wants to bother with you, I don't care if you go while she is here; but you must not expect to go as a regular thing. I cannot have you with that set of children. That is really the worst thing about our poverty, Margery, the class of children they have to associate with, and the language they pick up. Just the other day Fred was counting for me, and when he reached the limit of his knowledge he said serenely, 'That's *all the far I can go!*' and just then he heard a knock at the door, and told me that some one *wanted in*. Just think of it! Do you wonder I feel as I do?"

"Indeed I do not; and I am so glad you will let the boys go. I will take good care of them, and you can have a quiet nap while we are gone. Thank you ever so much. I dislike so to go alone."

Margery gave each of the boys a picture book to amuse them while she dispatched the morning work, for she meant if possible not to let them see a dull moment during the day. They should help her fulfill the command to "rejoice and be glad." She had taken the precaution to bring with her the brightest and best of the large store of juvenile books with which the Mayne nursery was supplied, and those which she now gave to the boys so charmed them that they could scarcely believe their ears when Margery told them that the work was all done and the day was theirs together. One generous maple grew in the corner of the back yard. Under the shade of this Margery sat with her charge and told them Bible stories until the shifting of the shadows warned her that it was time for them to lunch and dress for church and Sunday-school.

"This has n't seemed a bit like Sunday," remarked Walter, as they sat quietly in the cool evening twilight. The story of their first day in church had been told over and over by both boys to their mother. A most minute description of their Sunday-school teacher had been furnished; their papers and text-cards read, and now, tired and happy, they were ready for bed.

"Why has it not seemed like Sunday?" asked Mrs. Morgan.

"Oh, it has been such a jolly day, I'm sorry it's all through. I wish 't was Sunday again to-morrow."

"So do I," assented Fred.

As for Margery, the day she had so much dreaded seemed to have flown by on swift wings. Such a busy day it had been to her! Yes, such a happy day! To feel that she had been able to make for the boys their first pleasant Sunday was sufficient in itself to make her "rejoice and be glad."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE FIRST LETTERS.

NEARLY two weeks had now elapsed since the Mayne party started for Colorado. An occasional hastily written card, mailed at different stations along the route, had kept Mrs. Morgan and Margery informed of their prosperous journey thither, and of the good health of all; but real letters, they said, would be deferred till they reached their first stopping place. "Then," remarked Harry in one of his characteristic cards, "tidy up the room, wash your face and hands, and sit down prepared to read one hundred pages of manuscript at the very least."

Margery wished fervently that the promised pages would hurry and come, even if there were but ten instead of one hundred. When at last Walter came bounding into the room where Mrs. Morgan and Margery sat sewing, flourishing a fat envelope in either hand, the work was promptly laid aside and neither stopped to "tidy up the room," you may be sure. The long-looked-for letters from the travelers had come at last. Margery tore her envelope open in such haste that it fell completely apart, scattering its contents in a white shower upon the carpet. One, two, three, four, five, six separate packets, counted Walter as he helped her pick them up.

"One from every single one of them, even Ted and Dot," laughed Margery, as she glanced at a tiny sheet on which were Ted's scrawling characters and Dot's rambling marks. "How good of them! I will take them to my room if you please, Mrs. Morgan, for Walter and Fred will be anxious to hear you read Gertrude's letter, and I will share them with you afterward." And gathering the precious bundle in her hands, she danced into the little bedroom and sat down in the low chintz-cushioned chair to enjoy her feast.

"Was it not funny," she confided to her diary that night, "that, when the letters really came, I read every single one of the others before I touched mamma's? I began with Ted's and followed every one of Dot's funny little marks, and tried to guess what they meant, and then I read Harry's nonsense (such a dear, silly boy he is!) and Gertrude's beautiful descriptions of what they saw, and papa's short, businesslike one, — written for all the world like a prescription. — and then, last of all, the dear, darling mother's. Would n't you have thought I 'd have taken hers the first thing? But I could n't someway — I wanted to have the others all off my mind and just settle down to real solid comfort with hers — not feel as if I must hurry it through to read the others. I read all the rest to Mrs. Morgan afterward, but not mother's. I just told her some things she said. Of course the letter was just such a sweet, lovely one as you might expect from mamma, and the beauty of it was it did n't make me feel the least bit homesick, but only glad I did it — came here I mean. I call it my first love letter, and I shall always keep it and never show it to any one."

So you see, dear reader, that Mrs. Mayne's letter is forbidden us. And I say, happy is that young girl whose first real love letter is from a loving Christian mother. Keep it then, Margery: guard it as jealously as you please. Live as long as you may, no other hand will ever write you a message from a heart half as tender and true. Lovers and friends may be plenty — of mothers there will be but one! We may have the other letters, however, in the order in which Margery read them.

*Dear Margie,* — I saw prairie dogs. I like to ride on the cars. Gertie is pretty, but I like you best. We sleeped on shelves in the cars. Dot and I had the bottom shelf in one cupboard, and nurse had the top one, and the rest had some in some more cupboards. In the morning the man put up the top shelves and made car seats out of the bottom ones. I wish you had come too.

Good-by,

HALSTEAD MAYNE.

Mamma spelled me the hard words. Good-by.

Dot's letter was not translatable.

COLORADO SPRINGS, Col., July 3.

*Dear Kit,* — Our family assembled in council last night and agreed to divide up the correspondence business as follows, so that we should not all tell you the same things: father is to deal in solid facts and statistics; mother will do the affection and "miss-you-at-home" business, and also furnish all necessary advice; Gertrude will come out strong on the scenery part — "lofty mountain," "rushing torrent," "broad expanse," "gloomy solitude," and all that; your humble servant has charge of the department of miscellany, for which broad field his diversity of talent so eminently fits him. Having all his life been accustomed to make a very little knowledge go a long way, he has acquired quite a reputation for that broad culture which the field of miscellany seems to demand. Halstead and Dorothy insist on sharing the burden of our literary attempt, but we have thought it best to place no restriction upon their budding thoughts but leave their infantile minds free to roam in any available realm of fancy. Halstead is at this moment engrossed by a mercantile affair. I see from my chamber window and learn from the scraps of conversation that float upward that he is trying to arrange with a barefooted, frowsy-headed urchin the purchase of a reptile which they call a horned toad. Said toad looks, as near as I can make out from my point of view, like an oval piece of mud flattened on two sides and sprinkled with gunpowder. I believe there is a pointed stick stuck in one end which may be a tail; the head is not, from this distance, visible. They say it has a row of horns all around the margin of it. Anyway the toad seems to be quite an article of commerce in Colorado, for I hear the urchin telling father, who has just joined the group, that this toad is dirt cheap at fifteen cents. Also he tells him that "folks buys 'em and sends 'em back east to their friends for pets." "For pets?" echoes father. "Yes, sir! you can tame 'em same's a cat or dog, so's they'll follow you all round and come when you call 'em. They make mighty nice pets; and" (seeing father hesitate with his hand in his pocket) "they're scarce an' hard to get." Well, father has bought the toad and delivered it to Ted, who, with the familiarity of a born naturalist, has taken it in his hand and gone in search of a box. I see the boy slouch across the street and hear him mutter to himself: "There! I knowed they was tenderfeet." I wonder what he means. Probably he has cheated Ted in the matter of the toad. If you will excuse me a moment, I will go down and see.

*Four hours later.* — It did not take me all this time to find out about the toad, but other matters engaged me and I concluded to put off finishing my miscellanies till evening; so here I am in my room at the hotel, sitting under the searching glare of the electric light, trying to imagine I am in Colorado. Things don't seem as I expected them. I was in for wildness and rusticity and "roughing it" and all that, and I find myself with every convenience of modern civilization. It is really very disappointing to have one's hopes dashed in this way, to get out of the cars in the heart of the "wild and woolly west" and be confronted by a stunning stone depot, finished inside with carved oak and stained glass, and then to be put into a landeau and driven to a stylish hotel through business streets flaunting their plate glass and fine stone architecture and gay equipages and jingling horse cars and rows and rows of wire-laden poles — telegraph poles, electric light poles, telephone poles, everything but the North Pole, and possibly that — don't know as I should know it if I saw it; past elegant residences, with diamond window panes and oriel windows and shingled gables and Dutch doors and dismal paint and all that goes to make up the anciento-modern, or moderno-ancient architecture of to-day — I don't know what they call it; to be driven past all this and get out in front of an imposing hotel and see the piazzas thronged with fashionably dressed ladies, and children with French nurses in aprons and caps, and be taken to one's apartments (engaged beforehand by telegraph too) in an elevator. I leave it to you, Kit, if this is hardly fair to a fellow who has been looking for something after the "Buffalo Bill" style. Why, one might as well go to Newport or Saratoga and be done with it. The only really "native" thing I have struck yet was the horned-toad episode. By the way, I must tell you the result of my investigations. I am told that this reptile is quite common here, not a real toad, but a sort of lizard, with a long name of course, and that they really may be tamed if any one knows how to do it. They say they are as common in a schoolboy's pocket as tops, marbles, or string, and that they are considered quite as proper a gift for a teacher as the regulation apple or bonbon of the east. To-morrow we go to Manitou, Garden of the Gods, Grand Cavern, etc., as per guidebook. We shall then decide whether to make headquarters for our first month here or at Manitou. As for me, I want to be off to the mountains on a camping trip soon. Possibly there I may find the "native" and realize my dream of the west.

Kit, I hope you are not dismal and sorry you did it. If you could see how Gertrude takes it all in and how well she is looking, I know you would feel paid twice over; only it 's a shame you could not both be here. Never mind, we 'll come again together, Kit, just you and I, and by that time I 'll know all about it and act as guide. So brace up like the plucky girl I know you are.

Yours, HARRY.

Margery did not read the last paragraph to Mrs. Morgan.

"So Gertrude is to be the scene painter," said Mrs. Morgan, smiling. "She ought to do pretty well at that. I always enjoyed her descriptions of things. They seemed so vivid."

"Yes," answered Margery. "When she was talking to me about the hammock at grandma's, I could see it all just as she said it. I could almost feel the motion of the hammock and the breeze blowing across my face; but here is her letter: —

*Dear Margery,* — Harry has mapped out our work for us in his own fashion, and has informed me that I am expected to "do the scenery," as he calls it. It is quite possible that I may disappoint him in this, for if Colorado scenery is what it is reputed to be, it will require descriptive talent beyond anything that I possess to do it justice. Your brother Harry, by the way, is one of the drollest boys I ever met, as well as the best. I never felt really acquainted with him before. You know, being a boy, and in the class above us at school, he was not much in our school set, and that, you know, is the only "set" I have at home. I always thought I should be afraid of him, but he has been so jolly and kind that I can never thank him enough, and we get on splendidly together. I think he made up his mind that I should not be homesick, for all during our journey out if I began to feel the least bit solemn or blue, he was sure to be on hand with something bright to read, or some of his own delightful nonsense, till I found myself laughing in spite of everything. Sometimes I almost reproached myself for being so cheerful, because I knew that, according to all the storybooks I ever read, I ought to be weeping my eyes out in grief over my separation from mamma, or feeling the weight of an overwhelming obligation to you for letting me come. I *do* feel that, Margie dear (is n't it funny how much easier it is to say "dear" on paper than to say it in words?), *more* and *more*, and the happier time I have the more I feel it. You want me to enjoy it, I know, and so does mother, and — well, maybe it is dreadfully selfish and not the right thing to do — but now I am here, I am going to just let myself loose to have all the good I can out of my fairyland, for I know the wand will be waved all too soon which will transform me once more into poor Gertrude Morgan, of Poverty Heights. It *is* so strange, Margie — I can't make you realize it because you have always been in it — but I was so young when papa lost his money that it is just the same as though I had been born in poverty; and then to step so suddenly into such delicious ease and comfort! It is fairyland, real and true. I never knew such people as yours are, Margie. Such sweet, gentle kindness as they show me. Such a way they have of making me feel that I belong with them just as much as if I were you, and yet not one of them has ever said in words that they hoped I 'd feel at home. When people tell me to make myself at home, I always feel so awkward and don't know how to do it. If there is such a thing as "tact," I think they must have a remarkable share of it. I have just picked up the evening paper and glanced over the arrivals at our hotel, and this is how we are registered: "Dr. and Mrs. Mayne, family, and nurse, and Miss Gertrude Morgan." Could anything be nicer? See how independent that makes me feel among people, in spite of myself. There is no chance for any misunderstanding — no need of any explanations. I might be the daughter of a millionaire, for all any one here would know. I did venture to say to Harry that I felt almost like a sham, to have people class me right in with the aristocratic set who stopped here. I hated myself after I had said it, and of course I expected he would look sort of pitying and say: "Oh, please don't feel that way about it," or something of the sort; but he only looked solemn as an owl and said: —

"Of course, Miss Morgan [he never calls me 'Miss Morgan' in real earnest], one would 'rather be right than to be president,' and if your conscience troubles you in this matter, I will at once see that the proper explanation is appended to your name on the hotel register. What would you suggest? How would this do, say: 'Miss Morgan — poor but respectable' — or, 'a very worthy person, but in humble circumstances'? Of course I never remember to have seen anything just like that on a register; but one must dare to be conspicuous for the sake of being honest!"

It was so utterly ridiculous that I had to laugh, of course, and Harry laughed with me, and that was the last of it. I shall not make a fool of myself again, but try my best to reflect credit on the Dr. Mayne party, as we are called here.

Here I have written three full pages about nothing but my own selfish self. I have not told you a word about our journey, and as for scenery, we have n't had very much yet. Crossing the prairies of Kansas and the western plains of Colorado is monotonous enough. All about Pueblo is barren and dreary — so it seemed to me. Oh, of course there are farms along the Arkansas, fields of grain and alfalfa and all that, but that is not scenery, is it? Not natural scenery, anyway. We don't have to come to Colorado to see that. Oh, but there was one thing worth mention between here and Pueblo. The road follows very closely a stream which they call the Fontaine Qui Bouille — or more commonly the Fountain. Well, as the train whirled swiftly by, I caught most tantalizing glimpses of what seemed to be great trees covered with beautiful pink flowers. They looked like great oleanders, only the foliage seemed more graceful. Now and then one would be seen with the pink flowers intermingled with feathery tufts of white. These trees or shrubs — I could hardly tell which — seemed literally to line the banks of the muddy stream, and sometimes to almost interlace from bank to bank. At last the train slackened its speed to whistle some cattle off the track, and close at hand was such a group of pink and white, I strained my eyes to make them out, and finally the train stopped. And what do you think they really were? Actually, *wild roses!* Just think of it, Margie! hundreds and thousands of lovely wild roses, and the bushes grown to the size of trees! And the white was the blossom of a delicate vine that clambered all over the rose bushes. A white clematis, some one in the car told me it was. Oh, yes! and on the plains through which this rose-bordered stream ran, the cactus was in bloom. Red, yellow, and pink in almost every shade. So odd they are; looking like rosettes of satin pinned on the stiff, ungainly leaves of the prickly pear, or the funny green balls of what they call the cushion cactus. The tree cactus I did not see. They say that grows farther south. The lady who told me about the clematis says that we are just in time for the most beautiful Colorado flowers. I have already planned to make a collection for you. I am glad I thought to put my botanies in my trunk. To-morrow we go to see the sights, and next time I write you I shall have something to say outside of my petty self, perhaps.

I *hope* you do not get lonesome, and that the boys are moderately tame, and don't talk you to death. With love and love and love,

GERTRUDE.

"Gertrude will be happy if she has found wild flowers. I never saw a child with such a passion for them as she has," remarked Mrs. Morgan.

"Perhaps that was the reason she always stood so well in botany at school. Miss White said she made the most correct analyses of any one in her class," said Margery.

*My dear Daughter,* — I judge from the size of this letter packet, which they have left for me to add to, that there is not much I need to say. We had a very prosperous journey out, and so far are much pleased with what we see. We hear so much of the healthfulness of Colorado that it strikes us rather oddly at first to see so many invalids on the streets and about the hotels and to see the sign of a doctor's office at almost every turn. I am told that there are no less than twenty practicing physicians here in good standing, not to mention quacks and faith healers and Christian scientists, etc. The trouble is, one forgets this is a health resort, and that Colorado Springs' population must necessarily be largely made up of invalids and semi-invalids. It would please you, I am sure, to see how much Gertrude seems improved in health, even in the short time we have been out. Strange to say, she is the only one of the party who does not seem affected by the light air. A doctor whom I met this morning, and who has been resident here for some years, tells me that a person with perfectly sound lungs feels the short breath consequent upon the increased altitude far more than the consumptive or one with weakened lungs. We miss you very much, daughter, but I think we all feel proud of you for your sturdy resolution in the matter, and we are sure you will lose nothing by your sacrifice, either in peace of mind or the esteem and love of your friends. We are anxious to hear from you, and shall write you every few days, some one of us. Do not imagine from what I said that I consider Gertrude a consumptive. I do not; but she has that hereditary tendency, which I hope this change of climate will do much toward correcting. Give my kindest regards to Mrs. Morgan, and let her know my opinion of Gertrude's health. May God bless you, my dear Margery, and help you to be cheerful and happy.

Your affectionate father,

HARRISON MAYNE.

"They need not fear that I shall be lonesome and unhappy," said Margery brightly, when she had read Mrs. Morgan portions of her letters. "I think I was never so happy in my life. It is the first time I ever felt really useful, really necessary to any one, you know. Oh, I am so glad Gertie is having a good time! I knew they would be kind to her, but I was afraid she would not let herself enjoy it."

"You are a good girl, Margery." That was all Mrs. Morgan said, but it was much, coming from her.

# CHAPTER VIII.

## MARGERY'S CHARGE.

"GOOD-MORNIN', ma'am. Ye be Misthress Morgan, plaze?"

"Yes, I am Mrs. Morgan. What can I do for you? Will you be seated?"

"Thank ye, ma'am. I be a newcomer here, an' it plaze ye; I 've taken the bit house down at the end of the alley just beyant. I 'm a widder, ma'am — with no childer — barrin' this one ye sees by my side now, and I 'm off to service by the day. Me neighbor, Misthress Brown it was, was a-tellin' me as ye sometimes took the childer of the like o' me, by the day, for a bit of hire, ma'am. Ye see the chile is small like, to l'ave by herself, and I 've a good chance for a place, where they won't be bothered with a chile. I 'll be home the nights, an' I could l'ave her be where I 'll know she 's safe, ma'am, I 'd never begrudge the pay — if it 's razonable."

"We did sometimes take children in that way when my daughter was here; but she is away this summer, and I hardly think we could manage it."

"Indade, thin, ma'am, I 'm sorry to hear ye say it. It 's a good place I 'd be havin', an' stiddy work, if I could only lave the chile."

Margery, who, in her bedroom with door ajar, overheard this conversation, now stepped quickly out.

"Excuse me, Mrs. Morgan," she said, nodding pleasantly to the good-natured Irish woman, who sat holding by the hand an odd, freckled-faced little girl, and then turning to Mrs. Morgan — "excuse me for overhearing you; but if this woman would like to leave her little girl with us, why could not I look after her as well as Gertrude could? — not as well, perhaps, but I would do my best with her, if you thought proper to take her."

"It is not that you would not do well by the child, Margery," said Mrs. Morgan, "but I could not think of imposing such a task on you. You have enough already to do. No, I think we must not take children this summer."

"But," insisted Margery, "you forget that I am here to do just what Gertrude did, and that I am better able to do it." This in a low tone to Mrs. Morgan. Then aloud, "I am very fond of children, Mrs." —

"O'Finnegan, ma'am; O'Finnegan, plaze ye."

"Mrs. O'Finnegan, and if you would trust your little girl with me, I think we should get on nicely," continued Margery, nodding and smiling to the child, who had scarcely taken her dark blue eyes from Margery's face since she entered the room. "Would you like to stay with me?" she added to the child.

"Sure an' I would that," said this small daughter of Erin; and leaving her mother's side and crossing quickly to where Margery sat, she put her hand in hers, and looking into her face said gravely: —

"And it's the face of the blissid Vargin herself ye've got, ma'am, and if ye like I'll stay wid ye for always."

"Ah! go 'way wid ye! Where's ye manners? L'ave the lady alone, Nora. It's not many days she'd be wantin' ye, an' ye make free wid her like that!"

Margery laughed merrily and, patting the child's freckled hand, said encouragingly: —

"I am glad you like me, Nora. I always seem to make friends with the children, and I hope Mrs. Morgan will think it best for us to take you."

"Sure thin, ma'am," said Mrs. O'Finnegan, turning once more to Mrs. Morgan, "a lady like yourself 'll not have the heart to object whin the swate young lady 's that willin' and me Nora in love wid her already."

Mrs. Morgan smiled faintly. "Of course," she said, "if Miss Mayne really wishes it, I should have no objection to offer. Do you really wish it, Margery?"

"Indeed I do; and I think Walter and Fred would enjoy a companion. Do not you?"

Mrs. Morgan looked doubtful. "Perhaps so," she said; "but that need not matter. They do very well as they are; but have your own way about it, Margery."

"May the saints bless ye, thin!" ejaculated Mrs. O'Finnegan fervently. "And what would ye be after chargin' me the day?" turning to Margery. It was on her tongue's end to say, "Oh, nothing, Mrs. O'Finnegan; I should want no pay. I would be glad to do you the favor;" but she bethought herself that she was in Gertrude's stead; that Gertrude did this for money to buy books and clothes. Of course, then, in her absence she must earn it for her. How odd that seemed — to be working for pay! All this passed rapidly through her mind; but she betrayed nothing. She merely said, "Oh, I shall leave all arrangements to Mrs. Morgan."

"We have usually taken references," said Mrs. Morgan, in a businesslike manner. "You see, I have children of my own, and I must necessarily be particular about their associations."

"Sure, ma'am, and it 's right ye are," said Mrs. O'Finnegan, nodding emphatically, "and I 'll be pleased to give ye them. And I 'll not be afther asking the riference of ye, for that me neighbor, Mrs. Brown, gave me the character of ye before I came to ye."

Mrs. Morgan flushed. She had not been long enough in "Poverty flats" not to wince at the thought of a common Irish servant like this requiring a "character" of her! She took no notice of it, however, and went on to conclude the bargain with Mrs. O'Finnegan, whose references proved quite satisfactory. While this little matter of business was in hand between the elder ones, Margery took occasion to question somewhat further her prospective ward.

"How old are you, Nora?" she asked.

"Nine years come Michaelmas, ma'am."

"And when is Michaelmas?" questioned Margery, smiling.

Nora opened her blue eyes to their widest extent and fastened upon Margery a look of pitying wonder.

"And ye 're not after knowin' the Michaelmas, ma'am?" Margery always declared there was a depth of scorn, at her ignorance, in the child's tone.

"No," said Margery soberly, "I am afraid not."

"Why, thin," said Nora, "it 's the time o' the year when the leaves turn red, an' the frosts come, an' the feast of the howly Saint Michael; an' me birthday falls on the very Michaelmas day itself."

"But what month is it?" pursued Margery.

Nora shook her head. It was her turn to be puzzled now.

"I 'll not be after tellin' ye that," she said.

"What a devout little Catholic she is," thought Margery, "and how old for her years! She talks more like nineteen than nine years old; and so small — she looks almost elfish." Truly she was a strange-looking child, this Nora of the house of Finnegan — small as an average child of five, with straight, coal-black hair and clear blue eyes and a skin that would have been fair as Margery's own but for its freckles. Had it depended on the eyes and brow alone, she would have been pretty; but the nose had the upward tendency and the mouth the generous breadth that marks the true Hibernian, and in her case rendered the small face fairly grotesque. This face wore such a solemn look that Margery wondered if she ever smiled. Most of the Irish children she knew wore an almost perpetual grin, when they were not excited by anger or fear. Nora's face had also a look of serenity very unusual in a child, especially of *her* race, who were usually characterized by their flashy tempers, so Margery thought. But surely no passionate person could look as calm as did this morsel with the clear, deep eyes. Margery loved her already in spite of the mouth and nose. But Margery was impulsive, you know; and the child, with a touch of true Irish "blarney," had told her she had the face of the Virgin. And who of us is entirely impervious to flattery?

This was Saturday morning, and Mrs. O'Finnegan wished to leave Nora with them on the following Monday. She would breakfast at home, dine with the Morgans, and return with her mother, who came from her work at six o'clock. These arrangements being completed, and a price agreed upon, Nora and her mother departed, calling upon sundry saints to bless the two "swate ladies."

"I fear you will have more on your hands than you bargained for," said Mrs. Morgan. "I dislike to have you do it, Margery."

"Oh, no, Mrs. Morgan; I am sure I shall have no trouble at all. She is such a quiet little thing, and perhaps here is some real missionary work brought right to my door. Perhaps I can teach her many useful things."

"Perhaps so," assented Mrs. Morgan; but she looked doubtful.

Margery had contrived that on this Saturday fuller preparation should be made for the Sabbath, so that she could relieve Mrs. Morgan entirely on that day and still have plenty of time to devote to the boys. The busy day flew by and so filled her thoughts with plans for another happy Sunday for Walter and Fred that she thought little of her new charge until she sat down in the twilight for her bedtime talk with them. Both boys had been away when Mrs. O'Finnegan called, and nothing had as yet been said to them of the anticipated addition to the family circle. Now Margery told them all about it, and to her surprise they did not seem well pleased. She had not remembered that these summer day boarders were no new thing at the Morgan cottage. Instantly both children began to recall incidents of different ones whom Gertrude had had in charge at various times, and these incidents were on the whole not very pleasing. There was Dick, who broke their playthings and cheated at marbles; Tom, who called names and swore at them when mother and Gertrude did not hear. There was little two-year-old Sally, who was always running away, and Gertie made them spend all their time watching her — so the boys said. Then there was Jimmy Jones, aged four, who kicked and screamed when his face was washed for dinner, and insisted on eating with his fingers and wiping his mouth with his sleeve in spite of all that Gertie could do. And so they went on through the list.

"Did you have no nice children?" asked Margery.

"Yes, some," said Walter doubtfully; "but girls are such a bother. You have to give them all the best things just 'cause they *are* girls, and when they 're mean you can't hit them back."

"You should not want to 'hit them back,'" said Margery, laughing; "but I don't think this little Nora will be mean to you. She is a quiet little thing, and does not look at all bad-tempered. I hope you and Fred will try to make it as pleasant for her as you can."

"Yes," said Walter, heaving a sigh as he drew off one shoe and turned it upside down, scattering the sand and gravel over the sitting room carpet, "yes, that 's what Gertie always told us. We must be good to them, no matter what they did, because we had to have the money for them. I wish folks did n't have to have money for everything. I wish I owned this whole city, and I would n't be so mean and stingy as to make folks pay for every single bit of a thing they ate, and every old hat and clothes they were."

"You see, Margery," said Mrs. Morgan, a little bitterly, "it is not the love of money, but the want of money, that is the root of all evil."

"Wish I owned the whole world," chimed in Fred, "and I 'd throw all the old money in the stove, and then we 'd have fun."

"I know, boys," said Margery, "we do have to have money for a good many things ; but I was not thinking about the money when I said I hoped you would be kind to Nora. I was thinking if you, Walter, or you, Fred, were the only child and your mother had to leave you with strangers while she went to work, that you would like folks to be kind; would you not?"

"Ye-es, I s'pose so," from Walter.

"Bet I would!" from Fred.

"And you'll try hard to make it pleasant, won't you, boys?"

"Oh, yes, we'll try," said Walter.

"I'll let her kick my football all she wants to," said Fred.

"Pshaw! girls don't kick footballs," said Walter contemptuously; which only went to show, thought Margery, afterward, how little they knew of Nora. But she knew how much Fred's offer meant, for the football had been the result of petty self-denials and many extra chores for over a month.

"And now for bed, boys; and I wish you would remember about the gravel, Walter. It makes the room untidy, and causes extra work."

"I forgot this time, Margery; I don't mean to make you trouble."

"I know you don't; but boys will forget sometimes. Good-night; and don't talk, but go to sleep at once and be ready for Sunday."

"Good-night, Margery."

"Goody! goody! Sunday!"

And that was just like the two boys.

## CHAPTER IX.

### A PAGE OR TWO OF MARGERY'S JOURNAL.

MARGERY'S journal had been suggested by her mother as a place to write down things that she would like to tell her from day to day, and which she would hardly like to put into her letters, which would be more or less family property. There was to be no reserve in its pages, for they would be kept for mother's eye alone, and would give her — what she so longed to have — a knowledge of Margery's everyday experiences and trials. Sometimes the entries were very short, for it was not unusual for her to be so tired when evening came that she was glad to creep into bed with only a hasty chapter in her Bible and a few lines in the journal. But, like Margery, they were honest and to the point; for mother only was in mind when she wrote, and even if she had any disposition to write for effect, she would not undertake to sham for mother.

Here is the entry made after the events of the last chapter: —

*Saturday, July —.*

Such a funny Irish woman came to-day to have her little girl taken care of while she went to work! Mrs. Morgan did n't want to take her for fear it would be too hard for me, but I persuaded her to do it, because if I 'm to be Gertrude I want to do it all. I want to know *all about* being poor while I have a chance, for I may never have another; and to tell you the truth, mamma dear, I don't care much if I never do.

Poor Mrs. Morgan! I get sorrier and sorrier for her every day; everything hurts her so. I try just as hard as I can not to talk about home, for she is so *very* sensitive to the difference in the way we live; and you know, mamma, I always thought we were such very plain people; but now it seems to me sometimes as if *I* had been Cinderella, as Gertie says she is now, and I had come home and taken off the glass slipper and sat down in the ashes again, only everything is neat and clean here. I *do* get — oh, so homesick sometimes! (It won't do any harm to say it here, because when you see this it will all be over.) But I 'm not sorry — no, truly, I 'm not sorry I did it, for the more tired I get, the more I see how much poor Gertie needed a vacation after all these years and years of it. And if it was *you* instead of Mrs. Morgan, and I should see you work so hard and feel as sad as she does, I think it would just kill me. Mrs. Morgan said to-night that the *want* of money, not the love of it, is the root of all evil, and I almost think she is right. I used to think it was the rich only whose heads were full of dress; but when I see how Mrs. Morgan has to think and contrive to make one dollar do the work of ten, I don't see how she can think of anything else — she can't have a chance to; and as for reading or any kind of recreation, if you mentioned it she would either smile, that poor, pitiful, hopeless smile, or else she would look hard and bitter, and I don't know which makes me feel the worse. And, mamma, she is such a beautiful woman, too. She looks so out of place in these shabby quarters. I look at her sometimes, and imagine how she would look in a black velvet dress, with fine, white lace at the throat, and — Well, I should think Gertie would just go wild thinking of her staying on among such common people. You ought to have seen her face when that dreadful Mrs. O'Finnegan talked about her *references* and said she had her character from Mrs. Brown! Oh, I must stop talking about it — or writing rather —

or I shall begin to feel hard like Mrs. Morgan! Do you suppose, mamma, I could be a Christian if I were poor like that? Do you think Mrs. Morgan could? If she only could! If she could be helped to bear it better! Good-night now, dear mother; I must say over something quieting or I cannot sleep well. "As one whom his mother comforteth" — that will do, I think. It was a card I picked up to-day.

A week later she wrote this: —

Something happened to-day that I think you'd better not know until you come home, so I'll put it down here. You see, I have stayed pretty close in the house since I came here. I have been nowhere, in fact, except to the mission church on Sunday and to the little Tenth Street grocery where Mrs. Morgan deals; but to-day it was so hot and sultry that it was unbearable. There was no shade outside to speak of, and the children were in the house all the forenoon, and we had to keep a fire for Saturday's baking (Mrs. Morgan cannot afford to buy baker's stuff), and I suppose the children felt the heat too, for they were cross as bears, all of them, and Nora was simply dreadful. She teased Fred until he became so exasperated that he struck her, and then he had to be punished. She was saucy to me, and even to Mrs. Morgan, and when, finally, I could stand it no longer, I shut her in my bedroom for half an hour — or supposed I did. But she jumped out of the window and ran away, and I had to spend an hour in the hot sun looking her up. After dinner I resolved that something must be done; so I proposed to Mrs. Morgan that we take the horse cars and go out to the park to spend the afternoon, taking lunch and coming back in the cool of the evening. Of course she had a dress to finish, and could not go herself — but was willing the children should go if I cared to be bothered and could find anything decent for them to wear. I was so desperate about the heat and the quarreling that I really did n't care much if they went in rags — just so we could get a breath of fresh air and cool water and shade. Of course the children were wild about going and behaved very decently while I got them dressed and the lunch packed. To tell the truth, mamma, we were not a very *stylish*-looking company. Walter had to wear patched stockings, and the toes of Fred's shoes were out, and as for Nora — well she does sometimes get on the funniest rigs you ever saw, and to-day she was uncommonly grotesque — I think that 's the right word. She had on gaiters a size too large, with patent leather tips, white cotton stockings cut down from her mother's old ones, with legs so big that they hung in great wrinkles on her. Add to this a green and yellow calico skirt surmounted by a comical little black jersey and a pink slat sunbonnet, and I think you 'll agree with me that her dress was, to say the least, "rather pronounced," as Harry calls it. When I had first decided to go I laid out my clothes so that I could dress quickly after the children were ready, and when I went into my room after surveying the party I was to accompany, I burst out laughing in spite of heat and everything else: for actually, mother, I had laid out my prettiest white mull with its lace-trimmed flounces and sash of pale blue surah! What possessed me to bring these things along I 'm sure I cannot tell. Well! I put them back again with a great, wicked sigh, and pulled out that ugly striped seersucker with a jerk — I 'm going to tell the whole dreadful truth, mamma — and put it quickly on for fear my courage would fail me. Then I took my last spring's school hat and tore off the wreath of daisies and tied a dark brown ribbon around the crown, snatched a pair of shabby lisle gloves and a brown veil, and went forth to escort my party.

Mrs. Morgan looked up from her work as I came out, and such a queer, shocked expression came into her face! She looked first at me, then at Nora, then at Fred's toes and Walter's knees, and the tears sprang to her eyes — actually tears, mamma — and she is usually so proud and reserved.

"O Margery," she said, "this is too bad! I ought not to let you do it."

That took all the crossness out of me, and I just ran up and kissed her before I thought.

"Please don't," I said; "I don't care a bit — not one single bit. It 's all a jolly piece of fun, and we 'll have a lovely time."

I did not mean to stretch the truth, for I did intend to have a jolly time. Maybe it was cowardly in me, but when I was out of Mrs. Morgan's sight I tied the veil over my hat so as to hide my face, for we had to go quite through the city, you know, and I did not know whom I might meet. Sure enough, we had been in the car but a few moments when it was hailed, and there was a sound of gay laughter and a flutter of ribbons and white muslin, and who should come in but Belle Bowman and her cousin, Grace Austin, — you remember Grace; she visited Belle last winter, — and I gathered from their conversation that Belle was spending the summer with her at their country place, and they were in town for a day's shopping. You remember I always liked Belle — though some of the girls thought her rather "stuck-up" as they called it; but she was bright and witty, and seemed to take quite a fancy to me. I suppose she flattered me; at any rate she used to talk to the other girls about my perfect taste in dress and all that. The only thing I really had against her was that she did not seem cordial to Gertrude. We were the only other persons in the car, and when the girls had deposited their fare and settled their flounces, and smoothed the stray wrinkles out of their gloves and twisted their bracelets once or twice around, they looked at us, nudged each other, and began to laugh. I felt the blood creeping into my face, and was just mean enough to think how lucky I was to have on a veil.

"Even the humble walks of life have their round of gayety and dissipation. I judge from the looks of that modest lunch basket that our somewhat overdressed neighbors are about to indulge in the extravagance of an excursion to the park." This from Belle in a pretended undertone behind her fan, but she must have known it was perfectly audible to us. Grace tittered and nodded, and Belle went on : —

"Would n't you like a peep into that basket? I fancy I catch even now the delicate aroma of corned beef and bologna, and in my mind's eye I see primitive slabs of gingerbread and unlimited slices of dark bread and butter."

"Be careful," said Grace, between her giggles; "they 'll hear you."

"They would n't know enough to understand me if they did," answered Belle, with a sneer; "besides, the car makes too much noise; and, anyway, I don't care much if they do!"

The boys were too much absorbed looking out the windows to notice what was going on inside, but Nora, attracted, I suppose, by their fine dress and jewelry, had scarcely taken her eyes from them since their entrance, and I knew by the flash of her eye that she had understood enough to know that we were being ridiculed; she is unusually penetrating for her age, anyhow. By this time the "Old Adam" had risen pretty high in me, and I was just wondering if I could stand it until they got out, when Belle put the capsheaf on by remarking, this time in a tone of unmistakable distinctness, looking at my feet :—

"Don't you think French kid boots a little out of place in such surroundings ?" Then, changing her glance from me to Nora, "And, by the way, I see white stockings are again in fashion, and are worn easy fitting ; and that reminds me that I saw in the fashion notes the other day that a jersey is now considered an indispensable part of every lady's wardrobe."

When I saw her turning on Nora, I determined to stand it no longer and began untying my veil, but Nora's Irish was now fully up, and she was quicker than I. Jumping from her seat she faced her tormentor with blazing eyes and shook her small, freckled fist full in her face.

"Thin, I tell yez to yer face that ye 're no lady at all, if ye have got on fine clothes ; an' whin the fires of purgatory get ye, ye 'll be afther wishin' for even a pair of ould white stockings to kiver the naked legs o' ye."

"O Belle, I told you they 'd hear ! " said Grace, half frightened and really ashamed.

As for Belle, when she recovered from her first astonishment, she only sneered again and said tauntingly:—

"What a fierce little termagant it is, and so *refreshingly* Irish!"

By this time I had off my veil, and taking Nora by the arm made her sit down, while I turned to Belle and said with my politest bow,—

"Good-afternoon, Miss Bowman. This meeting is quite unexpected, but I see that your reputation as a refined humorist is well sustained." (You see, I had studied this speech all out while I sat under the veil. I wanted for once in my life to be sarcastic, and I thought as hard as I could of something that would sound like Harry or Gertrude.)

O mother, mother! if you just could have seen Belle's face when she recognized me! She turned white and then red, and gave a little scream of surprise.

"Why, Margery Mayne! Of all things! I thought you were in Colorado! Why, what on earth! How came *you* here? What can it mean?"

"I don't know that any explanations are necessary, and if they were, I should scarcely give them to you under the circumstances," I said.

"But, Margery, I can't in any possible way understand. Of course if I had known it was you" —

"Don't apologize, I beg of you; you only make a bad matter very much worse. People need veils, I see, sometimes, to thoroughly become acquainted with their friends," trying my best to be sarcastic, and nearly ready to cry in spite of myself. Just here Grace pulled the bell rope. "See, Belle, we get out here, don't we?" I knew they had two or three blocks more, but I was glad to have them walk in the hot sun. It was only an excuse to slink away, you see.

"Well, good-by, Miss Mayne!" Belle said as she rose; "I am sorry we must part after such a brief reunion. It was, as you say, quite unexpected."

"*And*, I hope you understand," I retorted, "that as *friends* we part *forever!*"

"Oh, certainly! I am sure I never had any affinity for ladies in 'reduced circumstances';" and with this parting shot she was gone.

Of course all the pleasure of the afternoon was spoiled for me; but the children had a good time in spite of our little scene, and I made them promise not to tell Mrs. Morgan. I took them to a little out-of-the-way restaurant and treated them to ice cream and cake, and bought each of them a toy balloon and a bag of candy, and was otherwise recklessly extravagant with them, for I doubted my having courage to come again; besides, we don't often get time.

But, O mother, mother, mother! I never in all my life felt so wicked. That 's the worst of it. If it is so hard to bear when I am only playing at poverty, what would it be to be really in it? If, as the Bible says, the rich shall *hardly* enter into the kingdom of heaven, I don't see how the poor can stand a ghost of a chance. Oh, dear! the clock is striking eleven, and my head aches so I can hardly see. It will be dreadful hard work to say my prayers to-night, mother; but I 'll try. How I do wish you were here — if only for five little minutes!

Some people do not believe in special providences; but I wonder what they would call the something that made Margery's Bible, which she opened at random, fall open at the following passages: —

"He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. . . . He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth."

Margery's cheeks burned. She wished she had not tried so hard to be sarcastic. She read on and on through the beautiful sixty-third and sixty-fourth chapters of Isaiah: — "For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit. . . . O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires . . . and great shall be the peace of thy children. . . . No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn."

"If that means anybody," thought Margery, "surely it must mean Mrs. Morgan. Surely he is the God of the poor."

Day by day, through all Margery's unusual experiences, light was shining more and more upon the Word of God. The Bible was becoming a strange, new reality to her. To be a Christian meant something more intensely practical than she had ever imagined. She laid down the Book in softened mood and found it not hard to pray. And the burden of her prayer was for sore-hearted Mrs. Morgan, who had comfort so near and did not seem to know it.

## CHAPTER X.

### MARGERY'S SUNDAY-SCHOOL CLASS.

MARGERY had been regular in her attendance at the Tenth Street Mission Chapel, the boys always accompanying her, much to their enjoyment and the relief of their mother, who looked forward to these quiet Sabbath afternoons alone with a degree of pleasure for which she sometimes reproached herself as being unmotherly. This time was usually devoted to Gertrude's weekly letter, as scarcely a moment could be found for that purpose during the busy week. Many of the regular assistants in the Sunday-school were absent during the summer months, and the superintendent was glad after a Sabbath or two to press Margery into the service. She demurred a good deal at first, having never felt old enough or wise enough to be a teacher — but, for the matter of that, what good teacher ever does? But when they proposed giving her the class to which Walter and Fred belonged, and their entreaties were added to those of the superintendent, she yielded.

The class consisted of six boys between the ages of six and ten, Fred being admitted because he did not wish to separate from Walter. Among them was the irrepressible Bob Stark, whose musical achievements have been related in a previous chapter. This Bob was conspicuous for a crown of rampant red hair, which no brush or comb, no water or oil, had ever been able to subdue; and although styles of hair dressing and cutting might come and go, our friend Bob's always remained *à la pompadour*. In the matter of freckles, Nora's face was comparatively spotless when compared with his, and his small blue eyes, separated from each other by the thinnest possible slice of a nose, gave his face a crafty look which boded ill for his future. Between him and Nora an intimacy had arisen which gave Margery no small trouble, for Nora's methods of inventing mischief were ample enough without any additions from Bob's apparently inexhaustible stock. It must be confessed that Margery's heart misgave her when she saw that Bob was to be one of her pupils. She resolved at once to try to make the lesson so entertaining that he would be compelled to forget his mischief in his interest in the subject. On the first Sunday of her teaching the lesson was about the calling of Samuel, and being of course familiar with it herself, and having previously told the story to Walter and Fred, she entered into its teaching with a good deal of confidence. That all the class might be familiar with the lesson text, she first read it to them from her Bible, making an occasional explanatory remark as she went on. Seemingly, Bob was paying strict attention to her words; really, he was deep in calculations as to how long it would take a big black bug, which he had discovered on Margery's dress, at the speed and in the direction it was now going, to reach her neck, and was wondering how high she would jump, and if she would scream as Maggie Dart did when he dropped a caterpillar down her neck.

"And now," said Margery, closing her Bible, "I will ask you a few questions to see how well you remember what I have read. Jim, who was Samuel living with?"

"Eli!"

"Very good. And who was Eli?"

"An old man, who had some bad children," said Walter.

"Yes; but what did he do? What was his office? Will Bob tell me?"

Bob started at the sound of his name (the bug had changed its course and was taking a very roundabout way to Margery's neck).

"Ma'am?" he said.

"What was Eli's office?"

"I never knowed he run for office, ma'am."

Margery bit her lips, half amused, half vexed. "He was a priest of the Lord," she said, "something like our ministers nowadays, you know, and Samuel lived with him."

"My! I'd hated to be in Sam's place," said Bob fervently.

To change the subject quickly and not appear to notice Bob's last remark, she asked him the first question that came to mind.

"When Samuel heard his name called, why did he get up and go to Eli?"

"I s'pose 'cause he was afeared he'd get licked if he laid abed any longer!"

Of course the class tittered, and Margery gave up questioning Bob Stark for that day, and he was left to undisturbed contemplation of the bug, which crawled as high as Margery's collar and then tumbled ingloriously to the floor.

Margery resolved to visit Bob in his home the very next week. She had read in Sunday-school papers and heard it said in Sunday-school conventions, that this was the unfailing remedy for all Sunday-school class maladies ; and in her imagination she saw Bob on the next Sunday not only giving rapt attention to the lesson, but astonishing the rest of the class by his discreet replies to her questions.

Alas for poor Margery's enthusiasm! She found Mrs. Stark up to her elbows in the wash-tub, in a hot, steaming kitchen, with Bob busy at the wringer, and three smaller children, in various conditions of dirt and disordered apparel, groveling on the sloppy floor. The door was open into the adjoining room, — the only other room in the house, — which presented a not very inviting appearance. Unmade beds with straw scattered on the floor, cast-off garments thrown carelessly over chairs, heaps of soiled clothing awaiting the wash, and in the midst of all this confusion an old crib in which lay a six-month-old baby, grasping in its fist a molasses-smeared crust of bread, and screaming at the top of its voice, while the flies took undisputed possession of its lunch and wandered at will over its hot, sticky face.

Now, my dear girls, I know what you will expect me to relate; and the same thing flashed through Margery's mind as she stood bewildered at the kitchen door, not having been able to make her knock heard in front by reason of the baby's cries. It occurred to her then, I say, that in accordance with all the stories of good girls she had ever read, she ought to go immediately into that dreadful room and take that sticky, ill-smelling baby in her arms, clasp it to her breast, and hush it in tender tones, till it dropped off by some miracle of animal magnetism into a sound and refreshing sleep, from which neither flies nor the fumes of hot, boiling suds could arouse it. Then she should have gathered the motley group in the kitchen about her, etc. etc. Yes, she felt that theoretically this was her proper course — but — but! — she had not the least idea how to begin; and besides she was not a storybook girl, but a very human girl, with little experience of the world, and truth compels me to relate that what she really did was this: —

She stood blushing in the open doorway, and stammered out an introduction to Mrs. Stark, — for Bob only grinned and made fantastic motions with the wringer in recognition of her presence, —

and said that, as she was Bob's Sunday-school teacher, she thought she would like to be acquainted with his mother. Whereupon Mrs. Stark drew her red arms from the suds and wiped the foam from first one and then the other, took up a corner of her apron to mop the perspiration from her face, and said she was sure she was right glad to meet her, and if she could get in for the dirt, would she be pleased to "come in and take a cheer?"

But Margery, not seeing any "cheer" handy, but seeing plenty of the other article mentioned, and thinking dubiously of her fresh cambric dress, which she had spent a half-hour that morning in ironing, stammered out some excuse and said she would call again when Mrs. Stark was not so busy. And Mrs. Stark looked grim, and said that if Margery knew when that time 'd come, she knowed more 'n she ever expected to, an' if she had anything to say, she 'd better come in an' say it now. Poor Margery said she had nothing especial to say. She only wanted to take an interest in her scholars, and she thought perhaps Mrs. Stark would be able to help Bob about his Sunday-school lesson, and she had brought him a card with next Sunday's Golden Text, and hoped he would learn it; and she asked if the baby was sick.

Mrs. Stark said, No; it mostly yelled on wash-days a good deal; but crying was good for children's lungs, an' she 'd got used to it, an' did n't mind it. And then Margery beat an inglorious retreat, with the baby's voice of lamentation sounding accusingly in her ears.

The next Sunday she went to her charge with a heavy heart. So keen was her sense of failure in her visit to Bob's home that she half expected him to be unusually provoking when they next met. But to her astonishment he held the card she had given him in his hand, and, without waiting to be invited, rattled off the text, with an interpretation similar to that which he had given of "Pull for the shore." And although he made several quite original remarks in the course of the instruction, he did nothing unusually scandalous, and Margery felt encouraged. It was Fred who distinguished himself on this occasion. As the youngest member of the class, he had heretofore taken no very active part in the exercises. In truth, Margery had been somewhat careful to address no direct questions to him, her experiences with him at home having been such as to assure her that his answer was likely to be of a quite uncertain character. To-day, in opening the lesson, she inquired: —

"Can any one tell me the story we talked about last Sunday?"

Fred's hand was the first one raised, and his face showed such eager interest that Margery ventured to try him; whereupon he gave the following graphic account of the calling of Samuel: —

"Samyul was a good little boy that had a new coat every single year. He lived with the preacher and slept in a bed all by himself, 'cause there was n't any other little boy to sleep with, I guess. So one night after he'd said his prayers and gone to bed — this is the way he said his prayers" — Here Fred slid suddenly to his knees, clasped his hands, and gazed upward with his dark blue eyes, in a perfect imitation of the picture of the child Samuel, which Margery had shown him from the old Tract Society primer, which she discovered among his mother's old books. Margery got him hastily back to his seat.

"There, Fred, you need not show us; only tell us about it."

"Well, after he'd gone to bed and the lamp was burning yet, he heard somebody holler, 'Samyul, Samyul!' and he s'posed of course 't was Eli, — that was the min'ster he lived with, you know, — and so he jumped out of bed quick as 'scat' and ran into Eli's bedroom and said, 'Sir?' and Eli said, 'I did n't call you; go back to bed.' So he went back to bed, and in a minute he heard somebody call again: 'Samyul! *O* Samyul!' and he jumped up and went to Eli again; and Eli said, 'I tell you I did n't call you. Go, stay in bed!' Well, and so he heard it again and he went and told Eli: 'Yes, you did call me, and I'd like to know what you want.' Then Eli told him, No, he did n't, and that it must have been God that called him; and he told him if he heard it again to tell God he was there. So he went to bed, and, sure enough, he heard it again, and he was n't a mite afraid, 'cause he'd been a good boy all day, and so he did n't stick his head under the bedclothes, but he just said, 'All right, God, I'm here!' And then God told him a whole lot of things to tell Eli, and in the morning he told him, and did n't tell no lies about it neither — and — and — I guess that's all."

If Margery felt a little shocked at this everyday rendering of the story, she could not help being pleased that he had remembered it so well; and certainly the class gave him undivided attention. That he did not mean to be irreverent she was sure; and perhaps, after all, she was not so badly shocked, for she had had some experience with Ted and Dot.

## CHAPTER XI.

### APPLIED THEOLOGY.

"I TELL ye there ain't nobody nor nothin' could bamboozle me into bein' good, an' if you ain't a bigger fool 'n I take ye fur, Bob Stark, you 'll quit all this Sunday-school business afore they git you roped in amongst the pious set."

These somewhat startling remarks, in Maggie Dart's high-keyed voice, came floating in at the open window, beside which Margery sat with her darning. In the few weeks of her residence with the Morgans, Margery had seen and heard enough of their next-door neighbor, Maggie Dart, to make her feel no surprise at any shocking thing she might utter. She had tried to keep Nora and the boys away from her as much as possible, and for the rest to pay no attention to her scandalous utterances, which were sometimes directed even against herself. But this open attack on one of her own charge, this shameless attempt to lure from the fold one of her own, — well, not lambs exactly; certainly Bob Stark could hardly be that; but one of her flock anyway, — could she, ought she, to pass it unnoticed? She looked out of the window; Maggie was returning with a book in her hand. Bob and Nora — yes, and Walter and Fred too — gathered in an expectant row on the fence. What dreadful thing could she be going to show them?

"Look at this picter I 've got," the shrill voice went on; "it 's in a book called '*Infunt Pi-ty;* or, The *Me-mawrs* of *Nathan W. Dickerman.*' Do you see 'im settin' there lookin' pious? Reckon you could ever look that-a-way, Bob?" And Maggie turned toward the waiting group the portrait page of a book she had brought out of the house.

Bob laughed until his eyes, always so crowded for space, disappeared almost entirely from view to make room for the gaping mouth, and his red hair glinted in the sun like jets of flame.

"I say, Mag, that 's a good un. Looks a heap like me, don't it, now? Air ye r'al'y skeered o' my gittin' to look like that?"

"He 's a pretty little boy anyway," broke in Fred. "Is he sick?"

"Yes, sonny," responded Maggie; "he 's sick; an' he wants to be a angel. That 's what our young friend Bob, here, wants to be too. I heard 'im sayin' so jest a few minutes ago."

"Look at this picture I have got."

Margery's Vacation. Page 140.

"Indade an' a swate angil he 'd make," chimed in Nora. "I 'd give the eyes o' me to see 'im holdin' a harp in them black, gr'asy hands o' his, an' tryin' to make a crown set straight on that standin'-up hair, 'dade an' I would that!"

"I never!" cried Bob, his laugh changing to sudden rage. Nora always acted upon his temper like a match to gunpowder. "I never 'lowed I wanted to be an angil, an' anybody 't says I did is a liar an' dar's n't back it!"

"Well, you was a-singin' of it a spell ago," said Maggie serenely; "for I heard ye."

"Singin' and sayin' 's two diff'rent things," growled Bob. "I don't want ter be 'n angil no more 'n you do, Maggie Dart!"

"What do ye go to Sunday-school fur, then, an' learn to sing them things and say Scriptur' verses fur, then?"

"W'y, I like ter sing, ye see, an' the tunes is purty, even ef ye don't go much on the words. Fact is, I don't pay much 'tention to the words, nohow — and Miss Margery, she do tell us some right interestin' stories too. You 'd think so yerself, Maggie, I know. You 're 's fond of stories as I be, any day. You used ter go yerself last winter. What made ye quit it?"

"Jest fur the very reason I 've be'n a-recommendin' you to quit fur. I wuz afeared I 'd git so good I 'd hev to die, an' I 'lowed ef all them things they sung an' said about heaven wuz true, I 'd ruther go 'most any place 's there.

"Take the singin', fur instance. I never could sing nohow, no more 'n a turkey gobbler ; and I knowed I 'd jest be nagged through all etarnity, like they nagged me at Sunday-school — pokin' a book in front of me, an' a-sayin,' 'Now, jest try, won't ye, my dear? ('T always maddens me to be called *my dear.*) Everybody can sing if they 'll only learn, and I 'm sure you must have a *lovely* voice' — jest 's if I did n't know *taffy* when I hearn it ! So they kep' at me until I 'lowed if they oncet heerd my 'lovely voice' they 'd leave me alone after it ; an' so one day I jest let out on 'em good an' loud. The *supyrintendunt,* he 'd jest be'n a-bangin' his book an' sayin', 'Sing louder ; put a little sperrit into it !' an' so I 'lowed ef I was ever goin' to take a hand, now was my chance; 'n' so I *sung.* I got every word right, I know that ; I 'd heerd 'em so many times 'n' wondered what on airth they meant, that I 'd got 'em by heart. The teachers jumped nigh off 'n their feet, and the boys laughed 'n' hollered, 'n' all the girls giggled, and the supyrintendunt he craned 'is neck over to see who 't was, an' the organ stopped playin', an' then the supyrintendunt, he says, kind o' sheepish-like, 'Not *quite so loud*, please; you put a little too much sperrit into 't this time; but I guess that 'll do fur to-day;' an' so he shet up 'is book 'n' dismissed school. An' my teacher, she says to me, — smilin' a awful sickly smile, — 'I was real glad you tried to sing, Maggie; but your voice is so strong, maybe you 'd better sing a little lower next time.' After that they let me be, an' stopped pokin' singin' books in front o' me. Wuz you there, Bob?"

Bob was rolling on the ground with feet kicking the air in a convulsion of merriment. As soon as he could find his voice he picked himself up and answered: —

"No, Mag, I wuz n't thar; but I 'd give my new jackknife and popgun an' throw in the chaw-gum 't Tom Snider promised me to-morrer ef I could a-heerd ye done it;" and he went off in another convulsion, while Nora dug her toes in the sand and asked soberly: —

"An' sure, an' don't ye b'lave ye could trick the angils an' saints the same fashion when ye got to heaven?"

Maggie shook her head.

"I would n't like to resk it. An' besides, thar' 's the harps. Why, I know an *Italiyun* boy thet plays a harp down town, an' he says what with holdin' the heavy thing an' workin' of it all day he 's clean beat out every night, an' 'is arms ache so he can't sleep, an' he says the continooal '*pum, pum*' of it next his head, so constant, makes him feel fairly luny sometimes. Now, jest think of keepin' that up day an' night forever — that 's what it says, you know — 'an' praise 'im day an' night,' them 's the very words. Besides, there 's them gold streets an' pearl gates: somebody 's got to keep 'em clean and polished; an' I jest knowed ef I was there I 'd hev to be one of the scrubbin' angils, — 'specially 's I could n't sing, — an' I hed enough o' that with Miss Jarvis' polished floors an' plate glass last time I tried to live out.

"So I got to studyin' ef thar wa' n't mebbe some middle place fur poor folks to be kind o' comfortable in when they died, but I could n't hear o' none. So I reckoned I would n't have no heavin in mine, an' I quit school."

"Did ye begin to show signs o' how good ye was a-gettin'? How did ye act? I 'd like to 'ave knowed ye about thet time."

Maggie grinned.

"No; I did n't say 's I was *gettin'* good — I wuz only *afeared* I would, that 's all; but I wuz only chaffin', Bob. The real reason I quit was becoz I 'd read all the'r books through. That 's all I went fur in the first place, jest to git books to read. When some the other churches up town gits another worn-out old lib'ry it wants to git shet of, 'n' sends it out here, I 'm a-goin' ag'in. Some the books is awful silly 'n' boshy, but there 's some right good stories among 'em, an' readin' 's kind o' scarce 't our house. Pop says when he gits our house all paid fur he 'll git me some books an' mebbe we kin take a paper."

"Where did you get that book with the pretty little boy in it?" asked Fred.

"This? The 'Infunt P*i*-ty,' you mean? Oh, a lady give it to me. She was one o' my teachers in the Sunday-school. You see, we had awful hard work to keep a teacher fur our class; some said 't was 'cause the gals acted so mean it worried 'em all out."

"I belave it," interpolated Nora. "If you was in the class, I doubt me if the blissid Vargin herself could have stood it with ye many wakes."

"I 'd 'a' liked to try 'er," responded Maggie irreverently; "but, as I was sayin', we had a change frequent, an' this one that give me the book tried the hardest of any of 'em to stick it out. She tuk a heap o' trouble fur us anyway. She druv out in her kerridge one day an' went round to see all her scholars. When she come to our house I wuz a-settin' down finishin' a novel 't pop 'd brought me — pop 's awful good about that; he brings me all he can get hold of. Well, this was a number one story. It was 'The Ha'nted House; or, The Myst'ry of Beechwood.' An' I got so int'rusted in it that I 'd set right down an' left the dinner dishes a-standin' an' the floor wa' n't swep' an' things *did n't* look none *too* genteel, I reckon. Well, she come in, an' she looked sort o' disgusted like underneath the smile she 'lowed she 'd ought 'er put on fur me, an' I said, 'Will you take a cheer, ma'am? I ain't got things slicked up yet. I did n't 'spect no comp'ny an' so I thought I 'd read a spell first, an' I hope you 'll excuse the way things looks.' I did n't fergit my manners if I was taken by s'prise. An' she says, 'Certingly, I 'll excuse you, Maggie; but don't you think it better to always do the work first and read after it is done?' Well, I jest loved 'er fur that speech —

liked it better 'n anything I 'd heerd 'er say, coz I knowed she meant it honest, an' it wa' n't no taffy. I 'd got so used ter that sort o' folks givin' me taffy that I 'lowed to hear 'er say, 'Oh, don't 'poligize. Everything looks *bee-yu-tiful* here;' an' I was jest gittin' ready to despise 'er fur lyin' when she up an' said that; an' I was so beat I did n't even answer 'er fur a minute, an' then I said I 'lowed p'r'aps 't was the best way, but I 'd got int'rusted in my story" —

"But what about the book with the pretty boy in it?" persisted Fred.

"I 'm a-comin' to that; 'the longest way round 's the surest way hum', you know, sonny."

"But I don't want to go home; I want to hear about the boy."

"Jest hold on, then, till I tell ye. Well, an' then she says, 'I 'm very glad you like to read, Maggie. May I see your book?' An' so I give it to 'er, and she looked at the title an' turned over the leaves a spell an' kind o' scowled like an' shook 'er head, an' says she, 'I hate to see ye wastin' time on such stuff as this, Maggie. You ought to have something more improvin' to the mind.' So then I told 'er that I had to read whatever I could git, an' I s'posed 'beggars must n't be choosers,' an' I did n't see but what 't was a right good story; an' she said 't wa' n't true, not a word of it, an' such things gave the young 'false impressions of life'; them was her very words; I dun 'no' what they mean, but I remembered 'em 'coz they was high-soundin' an' booky. An' she said she had some right good stories at home thet wuz true and had good morrils, an' ef I 'd like 'em she 'd send 'em to me; an' so she did, an' this is one of 'em. She sent me four — 'Infunt P*i*-ty' an' 'Aunt Sally' — that was about a slave woman down south 't let 'em beat 'er 'n' cuff 'er 'n' knock 'er roun', an' never made no fuss 'coz she 'loved Jesus'; an' I 'lowed if I 'd have to be that a-way that was another reason I did n't want to be good; an' then there was 'Six Months in a Convent.' That was prime! most as good as a detective story. And then there was a *memawr* of somebody else — I disremember the name; but 't was about some little gal that never did nothin' wrong and did n't talk about much of anything else but how she 'loved Jesus,' an' how sorry she was fur her sins. I 'lowed ef she was always so good I did n't see what she had to be sorry fur, an' so I asked the lady about it when she come ag'in, an' she said, why, of course everybody had to be sorry fur their sins. An' I said, 'But, 'cordin' to the book, that little gal did n't have none.' An' she said as how we wuz all born in sin, an' asked me ef I had n't got fur enough in the cat'chism to learn that

> **'In Adam's fall**
> **We sinnid all.'**

(She 'd give me a Tract Primer with that in it afore.) So I thought if we was all sinners, whether we 'd done anything wrong or not, I might 's well have some o' the game 's the name. An' there 's a heap o' fun to be got out o' sinnin', hain't there, Bob ?"

"Bet yer life," responded Bob, grinning.

Margery had listened to the conversation thus far with "conflicting emotions," as the books say. She was shocked, amused, astonished. Shockingly irreverent as many of Maggie's utterances seemed to her, there was yet an irresistible drollery in her remarks that appealed strongly to her own sense of humor. If the truth must be told, she laughed almost as heartily at the episode of Maggie's musical exhibition as did even Bob himself — rebuking herself afterward that she was not more impressed by the malicious mischief which she knew had been the real motive of Maggie's exploit. Her astonishment was at the revelation of her own character which Maggie had thus unconsciously made. That this rude, uncouth girl, who had seemed to her without one redeeming trait of mind or character, should care to read anything, would have been in itself a surprise. But she had shown that a love for reading was almost a passion with her. She was willing to endure the restraint of a Sunday-school which she hated for the sake of books to read. Margery thought at once of the public library, and wondered if Maggie knew about it. In her account of her teacher's first call, two things struck Margery with such force that she scarcely knew at which to wonder most. The first was that the girl had pride enough to be ashamed of a disorderly house. The second was the innate love of truth which compelled her admiration of her teacher's frank rebuke. Surely this ignorant girl had qualities of mind and heart not to be despised. Margery resolved to talk to mamma about her in the diary that night. In the meantime the conversation was taking such a drift that she thought it best to call her charges away. She felt that none of them needed to be confirmed in their belief of the attractiveness of sin. So, without letting them know that she had overheard them, she contrived to disperse the assembly and put an end to this somewhat novel theological discussion.

"Margery," said Fred that night as they were making ready for bed, "do all good little boys have to be sick and die?"

"Why, no, Fred; of course not. Who put that notion into your head?" asked Margery innocently.

"Maggie Dart said so; she showed us a picture of a pretty little boy that had to die because he was good and loved Jesus. He was in bed and he looked some like the picture of Samuel in the Tract Primer book."

"Well, Samuel was a good boy, and he did n't die. He lived to be a real old man," interposed Walter.

"Yes, indeed, he did," said Margery, thankful for help from such an unexpected quarter; "he lived a long and very useful life. People who are good are apt to live much longer than those who are wicked. I have heard my father say that often, and there is a verse in the Bible about it that I will find for you to-morrow. We can have it for one of our class verses, and then Bob Stark can learn it too."

"Why do you want Bob to know it?" asked Walter.

"Because he has, perhaps, heard Maggie say the same foolish things that you have, and I want him to know that it is not true. A good many people talk that way, but they do not really believe it. It is only an excuse for not being good, and I think it a very cowardly one too."

"Why do good people live longer than bad ones?" pursued Fred. (Gertrude used to declare that in Fred's mental composition there was at least ninety per cent of *why*.)

"Can you not think of any reasons yourselves?"

There was a pause, and then, as usual, Fred was first to answer.

"Because, if they 're good, the policeman won't get them and they won't be hung!"

"Pshaw!" said Walter, who, when left behind, always felt disposed to pick flaws in Fred's answers, "all bad folks don't get hung — only a very few of them. Do they, Margery?"

"No," said Margery, laughing; "neither do all bad people die young. Perhaps you can think of another reason, Walter."

"Yes," said Walter deliberately; "I was just going to tell one that I had thought of. Bad people are very apt to drink whiskey and use tobacco, and our hygiene says that they are slow poisons and very bad for the human body — especially the stomach and the brain. It says" —

"Yes," interrupted Fred excitedly, "that 's so. My teacher says the alcohol just sucks up every bit of water there is in you, and makes your heart go jumping just like that," illustrating by a series of rapid thumps upon his chest in the supposed region of his heart.

"Well, can't you wait till I get done talking, before you put in?"

"It takes you so awful long that I can't get a chance to say anything, hardly, at all."

"Don't quarrel about it, boys. Walter's reason was a very good one. People who try to do what is right take the best care they can of their bodies. While wicked people sit up late at night, drinking and carousing, they are taking sweet sleep in their nice clean beds — just as you are going to do now." And Margery fastened the last button of Fred's gown and turned down the covers of the bed. "I will find the verse for you to-morrow, and you can tell it to Bob — yes, and Maggie too, if you wish."

Walter shook his head. "She would only laugh at me. She says she don't go much on the Bible, and she makes lots of fun of us for going to Sunday-school. She 's trying her very best to get Bob not to go."

"Well, we must try very hard to get him to stay then. Perhaps we can get Maggie to go. Will you help me try?"

"It 's no use. She says nobody can do that, and she don't want to be good" —

"Nor be 'n angel neither," chimed in Fred.

"It is very silly and wicked for Maggie to talk that way, and I would n't listen to her if I were you. Perhaps, though, she does not know any better, and we can find some way to help her. I will think about it to-night, and to-morrow we will talk it over together; but now you must really go to sleep. Shall we say 'Our Father' now?"

"Just one thing more, Margery," whispered Walter as she tucked in the cover; "don't let Nora know any of our plans, or she 'll tell Maggie and Bob every single word."

# CHAPTER XII.

## MAGGIE DART.

MARGERY'S resolution to confide in her journal that night was changed into a decision to write a letter immediately to her mother, asking advice and help. Accordingly, as soon as the boys were in bed, she went to her room and wrote as follows :-

"O mother mine! I don't believe Colorado was ever so far away as it is to-night. I need your help so much! And it will take two whole weeks to get an answer to my letter, even if you are not traveling all over in out-of-the-way places, where letters can never get to you; and in two weeks more, if something is not done, I think that dreadful girl will utterly ruin Nora and Bob and have a very bad effect even on Walter and Fred. I have spoken to you in my letters about her — Maggie Dart, I mean — the one who tried so hard to set the boys against me before I came. Well, she seems to watch me as close as a cat would a mouse, and whenever I have on a decent dress or a fresh ribbon, she makes grimaces at me and goes tiptoeing about the yard with her head in air, and holding up the skirt of her dirty calico dress in imitation of a fine lady putting on airs. This always makes the boys terribly angry, — for they take my part in everything, — and sometimes I think she does it more to tease them than for anything else. Of course I don't mind it for myself, — for I hope I 'm above letting an ignorant girl like that disturb me, — but I 'm so afraid she 'll set Bob and the rest of my class against me. She seems to have a good deal of influence over the neighborhood children. They are all afraid of her, and she amuses them besides — and I don't wonder. She made me laugh to-day until I was ashamed of myself; and yet she was saying most shocking things. Such a tongue as that girl has I never heard in my life."

Here followed a narration of Maggie's conversation with the children, which is recorded in the preceding chapter. Then Margery continued: —

"If I could only get her over to my side, I should have nothing more to fear: for she is certainly a ringleader among those I most wish to help; but I have n't an idea how to set about it. I feel almost afraid to try. If she 's worried out and discouraged all those good women who have tried to help her, I don't really see how a young, inexperienced girl like me can hope to do much with her. I have been thinking of what you said, about the *key of love* unlocking every human heart, if only we could find the keyhole; but I 'm afraid, mother dear, that even if I do find the keyhole to Maggie's heart, the lock will be so very rusty that it will take greater patience and strength than I possess to turn it. Nevertheless, I am going to try. The only thing I can possibly think of yet is to give her something to read. I can let one of the boys offer it to her, for I don't think I 'd better try to talk much to her just yet, or make sudden advances, she seems so suspicious of me; I don't see why. And besides, to tell the truth, mother, I feel, someway, afraid of her — afraid of what she might say or do if she suspected that I was going to try to make her good, as she calls it; or rather 'bamboozle' her into being good. Those were her very words. It 's bad enough for the children to hear such uncouth language, to say nothing of her ideas. Oh, I 've just thought! I have my Little Women with me. That will be just the thing to lend her. She can't help liking it, and as she keeps house for her father, she will be all the more interested in their housekeeping trials. I think I did not tell you that her mother is dead and she has no brothers or sisters. She and her father live alone in a little two-room house next door to Mrs. Morgan. He is a bricklayer and goes to work early in the morning, takes his dinner with him, and does not get home until nearly dark. That gives her a whole long day to plan mischief, when she has nothing to read. I have never been in the house, but from the looks of the back yard and her own person, I fancy she does n't give much time to her housekeeping. She keeps the front yard clean as anybody's, and has a flower bed in it which she tends with great care. She is a curious girl, anyway, and interests me in spite of myself. Now, mother, if you can help your rattle-brained Margery to the least little bit of a useful idea about *finding that keyhole,* I wish, if it were not so public, that you would telegraph it! . . .

P. S. I had thought about taking her to the public library some time, if I could get well enough acquainted with her. She could get plenty of good reading there. Would not that be a good plan? I also forgot to tell you her age. She is fourteen, and very large of her age; taller even than I am, and so awkward and *gawky!*"

It was Margery's way whenever she entertained a new plan of any sort to act upon it immediately, if possible. Accordingly she managed a short conference with the boys next morning, while their dressing was in progress, in order that the subject might not be broached after Nora's arrival.

She suggested her plan about the book, and Walter agreed to take it over to her immediately after breakfast.

"Yes," said Walter, in his grave, grown-up way, "I think that is a very good plan, Margery; for she told us yesterday that she went to Sunday-school once on purpose to get books to read."

"Oh, take her the book with the story of Joseph, and Moses, and Samson, and all the rest of those nice old fellows!" chimed in Fred. "I know she 'd just love to hear how David knocked the old giant down with a sling shot, and then stood on top of him and slashed his old head off with a sword. Would n't she, Walter?"

"Oh, that 's a boy's story. She would not want that. Girls don't care about sling shots and killing and such things."

"Maggie does. I heard her tell Bob Stark one day that her 'pop'—that's what she calls her father, you know—was going to bring her an awful nice story, with three murders in it. And I asked her what a murder meant, and she said it was killing somebody; so I know she'd like the David and G'liath story."

"Say, Margery, are there any girls' stories in the Bible? I never heard one; but I suppose you pick out boys' stories for us on purpose."

"Why, no, Walter; I never thought about it. Yes, of course there are girls' stories. There's—let me see—there's"— But Margery could not think of a single one. "Well, I know there are some. I'll have to hunt them up."

"Not for us, though," said Walter.

"Course not for us," echoed Fred.

"I found that verse we were speaking of last night. It is this: 'With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.' This is one of the verses in a chapter about the godly man. It is a nice chapter. Perhaps we will read it some day. There is another verse which says, 'It shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days.' But come, now, I hear your mother calling, and we must go to breakfast. One thing more, boys: try to be as polite and kind to Maggie as you know how."

"Yes 'm!"

"All right, Margery!"

When Walter returned from his errand about the book, Margery called him aside to learn his success.

"She was n't very polite about it, I don't think, Margery," he said. "I knocked at the door and she opened it and said, 'Hello, Prinky! what do *you* want?' It makes me mad when she calls me *Prinky*, and I forgot all about my promising you to be polite, and so I said, 'I guess I don't want anything now. I was going to give you a nice book to read, but if you have n't any more manners than to call me names, I 'll just take it home again;' and I started to go; but she called out, 'Oh, come back, Walter! please do. I did n't mean nothin' only fun. I won't call you that no more, never, if you let me see your book.' And so by that time I 'd remembered what I promised you, and what I was taking her the book for, and so I went back and gave it to her. She grabbed it quick as lightning and began looking it through, and she says, 'It looks like an awful good story. Where 'd you get it?' When I said it was Miss

Margery's, she stuck her nose up in the air and says, 'Did she tell you to bring it? 'Cause if she did, it 'll be a pious story, sure, an' I ain't no use for them kind.'"

"Well, what did you say to that, Walter?"

"I did n't know what to say at first, because you had asked me not to say that you sent it; but I pretended not to notice her asking if you sent it, and I said, 'I don't believe it 's the kind that you call pious stories, Maggie, because Miss Margery tells us a good many nice stories and none of her good children die when they 're little, and some of them are real funny children too.' 'Be they?' she said. 'Well, that 's queer. I 'lowed she was one of the church an' prayer-meetin' kind; but I would n't care if the Old Nick himself sent the book: if 't was a good story I 'd read it. So I 'll keep it an' take good care of it.' And just as I was going away she called out, 'You can tell Miss What-ye-may-call-'er that I 'm much *obleeged.*'"

"Well done! Walter. If you show as much judgment every time, you will be a great help to me in trying to make friends with Maggie. And you see she did not forget all her manners after all."

"I suppose," said Walter, swelling with pride at Margery's praise, "if Fred had taken the book, he would have let the cat right out the bag the very first thing, and told her what we were trying to do."

"Perhaps not. But you must remember that Fred is not as old as you are."

Encouraged by Maggie's civil message of thanks to herself, Margery determined to make some excuse to call on the girl, and get acquainted with her by talking over the heroes and heroines of Little Women. From what she had heard of her love for books, she judged, rightly, that in two or three days, at most, she would have finished the story. The excuse offered itself in a very unexpected way, on the second day after the loan of the book.

Maggie and Nora had indulged in one of their numerous quarrels across the fence, during which Nora, in a fit of Irish temper, had thrown a stone into her neighbor's yard. The missile landed in the center of one of Maggie's flower beds, breaking off, at the root, a magnificent stalk of marigold in full bloom. This plant, the only one of its kind in the small garden, was the pride of Maggie's heart, and nothing but Nora's nimble legs saved her from prompt vengeance. Indeed, Nora was so frightened at Maggie's angry threats that she scarcely ventured out of the house for the rest of the day, and glanced anxiously at the Dart cottage as she went swiftly by with her mother at night.

Margery, though vexed with Nora and sorry for Maggie's loss, yet could not help a secret feeling of exultation as she saw in the circumstance the desired opportunity to make friends with the strange, unapproachable girl. As soon as she could be spared for an hour from her duties, she took a car to the nearest greenhouse and returned with a large scarlet geranium in full bloom and a bouquet of various bright cut flowers. Armed with this peace offering she went after supper and knocked at Maggie's door. Maggie started, and her face grew almost as red as the geranium, when she saw who her visitor was. As for Margery, her heart was beating violently, so anxious was she for the success of her mission and so helpless she felt in the presence of this sharp-tongued, ignorant girl. She controlled herself sufficiently, however, to say cordially: —

"Good-afternoon, Maggie. I have brought you a flower in the place of the one which Nora spoiled for you this morning. I was very sorry about it, for I know you worked hard to get your beds in such nice order, and I have admired your beautiful marigolds very much. I had almost a mind to beg some of you last Sunday to wear with my white dress."

"*It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.*" Margery had offered no formulated prayer for the teaching of her lips when she came upon this errand, but the errand was for the Master. It was *In His Name* that she offered this, her cup of cold water, to one of his ignorant and unfortunate ones. Her very feeling of self-distrust was the strongest possible appeal to his strength; and has he not said, "*Before they call, I will answer*"? Had her words been prepared beforehand by the most skillful diplomat in the land, they could not better have accomplished her purpose. She had said to herself so often: "If only I could understand her; but she is so strange!" With the most intimate knowledge of her disposition, Margery could not have reached Maggie's heart more effectually. She had not come in a spirit of patronage to offer charity, but to make reparation for a wrong. She had praised Maggie's flowers and noticed her care of them, and this went almost as straight to the mark as does the praise of a baby to its mother. She had not brought her a common flower, but a real greenhouse plant in an earthen pot, such as rich ladies kept in their conservatories. And, crowning honor of all, this rich girl, whom Maggie had thought so proud, had actually wished to wear her flowers! Simple-hearted Margery did not know that the real cause of Maggie's ridicule of herself was envy of the pretty clothes for which she secretly longed.

"Shall I set the pot on this stand?" continued Margery. "It will look nicely there until you have time to set it out; and if you will give me a cup of water I will put these other flowers in it. The sun was so hot that they began to droop a little before I could get them home."

Maggie had stood flushing and paling, not knowing what to say. But now she found her voice.

"If ye please, ma'am," she said, "it 's an awful pretty flower; but I had n't ought to take it, fur I was more to blame 'n Nora, I guess. I began pickin' on her first, an' I 'm the biggest, an' I did it on purpose to make 'er mad; an' so I ought to take ther cons'quences, if they was any."

But Margery had already set the plant on a little pine stand by the window, and, without waiting for invitation from her confused hostess, had taken a chair beside it. It was her turn to be surprised now at Maggie's frank confession, and, remembering the girl's love of candor, she answered :—

"Perhaps you were some to blame, Maggie, but Nora ought not to let her temper get the better of her as she does, and maybe this will be a good lesson to you both; but I want you to keep the flower. There is a barren spot in the bed where the marigold used to be that we shall none of us like to see, and the geranium will fill it nicely. Don't take it up, but set it, pot and all, in the ground, and when the frost comes you can take it in the house and it will bloom all winter. You see, Maggie, we have almost as much pleasure from your flowers as you do yourself. Mrs. Morgan is too busy to tend flowers, but Walter and Fred are going to try next year to have a bed. Perhaps you can show them about it, if you will."

"Indeed, I 'll be glad to, miss; and bein' as ye put it that-a-way, I 'll keep yer plant, an' thank ye a thousand times. I never had no flowers half nor a quarter so pretty as this one." And she went up to the stand and touched the leaves in a half-caressing manner, which touched Margery strangely. Then, remembering the cut flowers, she fetched a blue tumbler, the pride of her scanty table furnishings, and filling it with water, gave it to Margery, who set the bouquet in the center of the little table where supper was waiting for Mr. Dart.

"Flowers brighten a tea table I think," she said as she did so, appearing not to notice the coarse, soiled cloth and disorderly arrangement of the table.

The "*tea table*"*!* Maggie's heart swelled with mingled pride and shame. Blushing hotly, she answered with characteristic frankness, —

"The flowers is awful pretty, but they make the tablecloth look too dirty to live. I 'd ought to 'ave washed it to-day, but I wanted so awful bad to find out how Jo got on with the perfesser in that book o' your 'n that I jest let it go. I 'm right sorry now, but there 's no use cryin' fur spilt milk."

"Do you like Jo, then?" said Margery eagerly. "I 'm so glad, for I like her best of all the folks in the story."

"So do I, unless 't is Laurie; I like him a heap."

"Yes, Laurie was nice; but," said Margery, rising, "I see your father coming, and I know he will be hungry and want his supper right away, so I will go now ; but, if you will let me, I would like to come again and talk over the book with you."

"I 'd be proud to have ye, if ye could take the trouble, ma'am ; and I 'll have a slicker room for ye to set in too. 'T ain't that I can't keep house no better, but I don't have much comp'ny an' so I git careless like."

Margery made her adieus and went home feeling that she had made at least a beginning in winning Maggie's friendship. If she had but known it, what she thought a beginning was in reality a complete conquest. The keyhole to Maggie's heart was found, and Margery's little golden key of love turned so noiselessly in the lock that she did not suspect its presence there.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### MARGERY AND MAGGIE.

WHEN next mending day came, Margery filled her workbasket with stockings, put in mending cotton and darning needles, took her sun hat from the rack, and said to Mrs. Morgan:

"If you think the children will not bother you while I am gone, I will go over and sit with Maggie Dart a little while."

Mrs. Morgan elevated her brows slightly and smiled a curious little smile.

"Oh, the children will be all right; but what in the world can you want with that girl?"

Margery laughed brightly as she said: —

"Oh, I have an engagement with her — a sort of *literary symposium*, as the big men call it. We are going to discuss our favorite characters in Little Women. I wish Gertrude was here to help, for I am not very literary myself."

"You are a queer girl, Margery, and I'm sure it is quite charitable for you to take an interest in all these ignorant people; but I'm afraid in this case it will be labor lost. You are not the first who has tried to civilize Maggie Dart, and, so far, she has proved incorrigible. I would give anything to have the boys away from her influence. If you should succeed in taming her at all, you would incur the gratitude of the entire neighborhood."

"Perhaps her reputation is worse than she really deserves. Mamma says that people who are too outspoken always make enemies. I have found out two good things about her already. She likes to read, and she is very fond of flowers."

"Ye-es," said Mrs. Morgan doubtfully, "that is well enough as far as it goes." But her face wore an expression of indulgent incredulity as Margery left the room, mending basket in hand.

Any one looking in at the Dart cottage fifteen minutes later would have been forcibly impressed by the scene in the dingy little room. Margery, in a fresh blue-sprigged cambric dress and white apron, sat on a low box by the open window, with one hand and arm thrust deeply into a long, gray stocking, while the other deftly guided the shining needle that glanced in and out among the threads of gray, which stretched like prison bars across the jagged rent. Her curls, loosely confined at the back by a blue ribbon, tumbled in pretty confusion on her shoulders as she bent forward at her task. Her cheeks were flushed, partly by the warmth of the summer afternoon, but more by the excitement of thoughts that flew faster than her needle: for as she sat there talking with her newly-made friend, there rushed into her mind in pellmell fashion numberless ways in which she might help this untaught girl. Maggie sat beside her, with her keen gray eyes watching eagerly every motion of the skillful needle, yet lifting them now and then to Margery's bright face with a look of admiring awe. Since Margery had proposed this visit, Maggie had been on the lookout for her, and every afternoon the living room had been swept and dusted, the cook stove cleaned, the pine stand by the window covered with a clean newspaper, and Margery's bouquet of greenhouse flowers, together with cuttings from Maggie's own beds, placed upon it. By way of further adornment a plaster of Paris cast of a sheep and two lambs, reposing on intensely blue-green grass, was set upon the window sill, and Maggie's cherished collection of books, including the "*Memawrs* of Nathan W. Dickerman," were laid in symmetrical piles across the four corners of the stand. The dining table, set back against the wall, was covered with a red cloth starched to such a degree that the corners projected rampant, and the selvages and hems, owing to the inexperience of their laundress, presented a decidedly *repand* appearance. Indeed, Maggie's desire to impress her expected guest with her ability to keep house had led her so far into the realm of decorative art that one of the wooden dining chairs (three of which represented the seating capacity of the room) was resplendent in a bow of magenta ribbon tied upon its dingy back, while a somewhat faded blue silk handkerchief, perched on the corner of a seven-by-nine looking-glass hung by white wrapping twine, did duty as drapery. Upon her own toilet, also, Maggie had spent unusual care. Her stiff brown hair was braided in a tight queue and tied with a piece of purple braid. A wide collar of coarse lace adorned her neck, and was surmounted by a string of blue glass beads. Her dress of pink calico rivaled the tablecloth in starchiness, and a bright Roman sash, a relic of her mother's girlhood, was tied about her waist. The contrast between the two girls as they sat thus together was indeed a striking one. Maggie, although two years younger than Margery, was half a head the taller, and had she been properly dressed and taught to control her awkward limbs would have been by no means a bad-looking girl. Margery noted this, and resolved when better acquainted to see what could be done for her in the way of improving her personal appearance. Just now they were absorbed in the darning.

"It beats me how you do it so quick and pretty," Maggie had said after watching her a while. "I never saw nothing like it. It don't look like darnin'. It's a heap more like some sort o' fancywork."

Margery was proud of her darning, and the girl's frank compliment pleased her.

"My grandmother taught me to do it," she answered. "We go to visit her every summer, and she always teaches me some useful thing each time. I was ten years old the summer she taught me darning. I made poor work of it at first. The holes would look all puckery and lumpy round the edges in spite of me — that is, the darns that used to be holes would. I'm afraid if grandmother had not been wonderfully patient with me I should have given it up as a bad job. By the time vacation was over, though, I could do it so well that mamma let me keep my own stockings in order, and now at home I do nearly all the family darning, especially the fine part, and I like it first-rate. It *is* like fancywork if you only think so and do it well."

"Do you reckon I could learn it? Pop grumbles a heap because we wear out so many stockings. He says if I had any gumption I could mend 'em up a little an' make 'em last like his maw used to, but I never had nobody to show me. Sometimes I do try to draw up the holes a bit, but they bu'st right out ag'in an' 't ain't no good. It looks awful easy when you do it though."

"Of course you could learn; and I 'd be glad to show you how. Perhaps you have some that need mending now. If you will bring them, we can work together, and it will seem quite sociable."

"I 've got some, but they 're so bad I 'm a'most ashamed to fetch 'em out."

"No worse than these, I guess;" and Margery held up a pair of Walter's with knees and heels so covered with darns as to render the original material invisible.

"Yes, a heap worse. Yours has them pretty darns where mine has holes; but I reckon I'll fetch 'em. I hain't got no needles nor yarn though."

"I will lend you some of mine, and when your father sees you know how to use them he will be glad to get you some."

"He will that. Pop ain't stingy with me, but he's tryin' awful hard to pay up fur the place, an' that's why he grumbles about things wearin' out so fast."

"It would be nice to have your home all paid for. I should think you could help him a good deal about it."

"I did try livin' out a spell; but I had n't had no one to show me how to do things the rich folks' way, an' so I could n't 'arn much; an' pop he had to hire 'is board while I was gone, an' so he said he reckoned 't would pay best fur me jest to keep house fur him an' not try to earn nothin' extra."

"I did not mean in that way. 'A penny saved is a penny earned,' you know; and if you could save by keeping things mended up, it would help toward paying for the house, just the same."

"I s'pose 't would. I had n't never thought about it that-a-way. When maw was a-livin' she got me a place to be cash girl in the store where she used to clerk afore she was married. My maw used ter be a *saleslady*, she did, an' she set store by havin' me learn her trade; but I did n't take to 't good at all. I used ter git mad an' flare up when they bossed me roun' an' jawed me too much, an' so they sent me home. Maw felt awful cut up about it, but pop he 'lowed as I was too little to work anyhow, an' he kind o' liked it."

"How long has your mother been dead?"

"It 'll be three year come next December. She 'n' the baby an' Mollie all died along 'bout the same time with dip'thery. I had it too, but it did n't kill me. Reckon I 'm too mean to die young."

"It must have been very hard for you and your father to be left so suddenly alone. You must try as hard as you can to help make up to him for the loss. You can be a great comfort to him if you try."

Maggie shook her head and grinned derisively.

"Me? No, I ain't no comfort to nobody. Nobody likes me, an' I don't like nobody, 'ceptin' pop an' a few storybook folks — an' you," she added, coloring. "I used ter hate ye though, an' try all I could to set the boys ag'in ye; but I ain't goin' to do it no more."

"Why did you hate me?" asked Margery, wondering what this queer girl would say next, and thinking that the time was slipping away and the book she had come to discuss had not yet been mentioned.

"I dun 'no', 'nless 't was because you was rich an' wore nice clothes, and I 'lowed you was stuck-up."

"Don't you like pretty clothes, Maggie? Would you not like to have them, if you could?"

"You bet I would," responded Maggie with more frankness than elegance.

"Then why do you dislike people who wear them? You can see the clothes better on some one else than if you wore them yourself."

"Would that suit you, Miss Margery, to see your clothes on some one else and you go shabby? You kin see flowers in a vase or a-growin' in the garden better 'n you can when they 're pinned on to you, but I notice you like to wear 'em jest the same."

"That is true, Maggie; and I don't believe it would quite suit me to have others wear my clothes for me; but I don't hate those who are able to wear nicer ones than I do."

"But you kin hev jest as fine clothes as you want, an' jest as many of 'em."

"No, indeed, Maggie, I can't. I often want pretty things that either papa cannot afford to buy me or that mamma does not think it best for me to have, but I try not to be unhappy about it. I have all I need — and perhaps," added Margery thoughtfully, "more than I *really* need."

"But why do you like to *wear* the flowers, an' bows of ribbon, an' soft, fine lace, an' all that?"

"Why, I suppose because they are pretty and I like nice things."

"Yes; but why ain't ye satisfied to look at 'em an' not wear em'? — to see 'em in the shop windows and on other folks an' in the garden, you know."

"Why, I don't know; I never thought much about it. It is curious, is n't it? I suppose it is because I want to look as nice as I can myself."

"That 's it!" cried Maggie triumphantly, "that 's jest it! 'cause you want to look pretty; an' that 's jest why I hate folks in fine clothes an' all that — because I want to look pretty an' I can't, an' I 'm afeared they 're a-laffin' an' a-pokin' fun at me, 'cause I 'm ugly as sin."

"But well-bred people do not ridicule others, Maggie; and for the rest, I would not care. They are not worth minding. Besides, you are not as ugly as *sin.* Sin is very ugly."

"Folks as has manners may not make fun of ye to yer face, but they think it jest the same. Look here, Miss Margery, ye don't dar'st to say that when you first saw me you did n't 'low 't I was about the orneriest gal you ever seen, an' that ye did n't notice how queer an' old an' dowdy my clothes wuz, an' that ye would n't a'most 'a' wanted to die ef ye'd ever s'pose ye'd come to look that-a-way. An' that day you fetched the flowers, 't was all you could do to keep from holdin' up yer pretty ruffled white skirts off 'n my dirty floor."

"Why, Maggie," began Margery in dismay, "I'm very sorry if"—

"No, ye did n't do it," interrupted Maggie hastily. "I said ye kep' from it, but I knowed ye wanted to awful bad. No, ye jest let 'em swish over the dirt an' dust like ye did n't know 't was there, an' when ye went to the door, an' I seen the nasty black streaks all over yer clean dress, I was that mad I could 'a' beat myself, an' I wished you had 'a' stuck up your nose or somethin' so I could 'a' been mad at you; but as 't was, I had to take it all myself, 'cause I did n't have a cleaner floor. But that 's what I say : folks thinks it ef they don't say it, an' I feel all the time how diff'rent I am from 'em, and it makes me that mad that sometimes, if I dar'st, I could' most kill myself. Pop says he don't go much on a God that lets some folks have more money 'n they can possibly use, an' some on 'em not enough to keep from starvin' ; and I say I don't go much on a God that makes some girls with soft, peachy-like skin an' curly shinin' hair an' eyes like the blue sky an' pretty white fingers — that rings seem to be made for — an' then makes others like *me !* "

"What is wrong with you, Maggie ?" asked Margery falteringly, not knowing what else to say, and thinking she must say something ; and wondering vaguely how the conversation came to take this unpleasant personal drift ; and feeling a strange, heart-sinking helplessness at Maggie's relapse into her reckless talk ; and wishing she could pick up her mending basket and beat a retreat, as she had done from Mrs. Stark's door on that memorable wash day. But she could not well do that. She must face it out, and try, as quickly as possible, to change the subject. Maggie talked so fast when she was excited that it was like trying to stop running water to repress her. The only thing possible was to change the current. So she said the first thing that offered, and her heart went out in an unconscious appeal for help in her extremity.

"What's wrong with me?" reiterated Maggie vehemently. "I should like to know what is right. Look at my freckled red face, an' my stiff, ugly hair, an' my big mouth an' nose, an' them hands. Would n't rings look fine on 'em?" spreading out a pair of grimy red hands with long, black-rimmed finger nails. "Now, don't go to sayin' 't ain't so, Miss Margery; please don't give me no taffy. I 've jest been a-lovin' ye fur yer takin' notice of me, an' comin' to set with me so sociable, an' not actin' like I was diff'rent from what ye 'd been used to, an' all that; but if ye go to pretendin' in words that I 'm jest the same as your kind is, that 'll be taffy an' it 'll spile it all. I *am* diff'rent, an' you know it an' I know it; an' what I want to know is, why God did it — made some one way an' some another? I mean. Can you tell me that?"

"No, Maggie, I cannot tell you that; and I 'm not sure that there is so much difference as you think. If you want me to be honest with you and will promise not to be angry at what I say, I will tell you what I think about you."

"No, I won't git mad. You can't tell me much worse 'n I know myself. I 'm homely 's all git out, an' I 'm ugly an' lazy an' everybody fairly hates me. There 's your ladified Mrs. Morgan over there, she 'd give anything to hev me die or clear out someway. Don't I know it? An' that 's jest what makes me love to bother her boys an' put 'em up to meanness."

"Well," said Margery, "I 'll tell you first about your looks. You are not pretty, but if you tried you could be as good-looking as the average girl of your age. Your skin is, as you say, red and freckled, but that is more the way you treat it than the way nature made it. You go out in the sun and wind a great deal with no hat or bonnet on. That burns and freckles your skin. Then — how often do you bathe, Maggie?"

Maggie colored up to the roots of her hair.

"Don't tell me if you 'd rather not," said Margery.

"Yes, I will too. I was the one that wanted you to be honest an' I won't back out. Sometimes 'f I get to feelin' pretty hot an' sticky, in hot weather, I washes all over every week or two;

but in the winter sometimes I go 's much as a month — it 's so cold an' our stove don't heat up good, an' it 's a bother to wash anyway, an' so I keep puttin' it off. Maw used ter wash us ev'ry week reg'lar when she was a-livin'."

"Well," said Margery, bravely hiding the disgust she felt at Maggie's revelation, "that is another thing that ails your skin. No one can have a soft, pretty skin without keeping it very clean. You have learned that at school, have you not?"

"I don't go to school much, since maw died. Pop he wants me to, but I tell 'm I can't keep house an' go to school too, an' he says when the house gits paid fur he kin hire somebody to keep house so 's 't I kin go. But I hate it. I 'm always gittin' mad an' makin' trouble, an' I 'd ruther stay 't home an' read. I could go well enough 'f I wanted to, but I make pop think I can't."

"I thought you took great pride in being honest, Maggie."

"I do — most ginerally; but I have to fib a little once in a while," said Maggie, coloring.

"No, you don't have to be dishonest at all; but let us go on with your skin. If you would bathe often, wear a hat or bonnet when you go out, and not eat much rich or greasy food, you might, I have no doubt, have a skin as soft and fair as any one's. That would make your hands all right too. They are not a bad shape. Your fingers are long and tapering and your nails are a real aristocratic shape. If you trimmed them and kept them clean, they would be lovely. See! your hands are a much better shape than mine." And Margery took one of them and laid her own beside it. The contrast was so great between Margery's clean hand and well-kept nails and her own slovenly one that, for the third time since their conversation began, this usually bold-fronted girl blushed hotly. She withdrew her hand quickly, muttering under her breath that she "'lowed" she might keep them a little cleaner if she tried.

"The same things," continued Margery, "the bonnet and the baths, would be good for your hair. To have nice hair it must be brushed a good deal and the scalp kept very clean. Bend your head down a minute. Yes, it is as I thought. The scalp is covered with dandruff and" —

"And dirt!" interposed Maggie; "ye need n't be afraid to say it, for it 's true."

"Well, then," said Margery, laughing, "since we are being so honest, I will admit that it is dirt.

Now, Maggie, if you will do what I tell you, I will help you all I can, and I give you my word that in a month from now people will wonder what has made Maggie Dart grow so good-looking. There is another thing you can do about your hair. Your forehead is too high to be pretty, and if you will let me cut off just a few of the front locks, short enough to curl "—

"Bang it, d' ye mean?" asked Maggie, grinning.

"Why, yes; that's what they call it; but it's such an ugly-sounding word I don't like it. I don't mean to make a great bunch of frowzy-looking frizzes — that would make you look silly, and your dark gray eyes are too intelligent to afford that" (Maggie colored this time with pleasure) —' but just a few little curly rings to lie carelessly on your forehead so it won't look so high. High foreheads may be very intellectual, but they're not pretty. May I help you?"

"If you wanted to take the trouble, Miss Margery, I'd do anything you said; and pop would be awful tickled. He often says he 'lows I'd look a heap like maw 'f I had her knack o' fixin' up. Maw was right good-lookin', she was."

"Well, then, supposing we begin right away.

Bring me the scissors and I 'll trim your hair now. You can get a good bath to-night, and wash your scalp well in a little ammonia water. I 'll lend you some of mine till you get a bottle. You know how to put the hair up in papers. Do it just before you go to bed and take it out the first thing in the morning. Mamma says a lady never wears curl papers outside her dressing room. Let me show you how to trim your nails now. There! do that often and keep them clean. We 'll talk about your clothes some other time. I must run home now and get supper, but I will come again as soon as I have time."

"You 're awful kind, an' I 'll do the best I kin to mind what ye say. It 's funny, though, I never knowed folks made theirselves pretty; I supposed God done it all."

"You see you did n't do God justice," said Margery impulsively. "People lay ever so much to him that they are to blame for themselves. Almost all the deformity and ugliness we see in people comes from somebody's abusing or misusing the bodies which God made perfect in the first place. Think about it, Maggie, and see if it is n't so. Good-night."

When Margery entered the room, Mrs. Morgan looked up from her work and asked half quizzingly how the "literary symposium" had prospered.

Margery shook her head with mock gravity.

"This is a dreadfully disappointing world, Mrs. Morgan. We did n't have any literary talk at all. On the contrary, we spoke on very sordid themes."

"May I ask what they were?"

"Oh, certainly. Let me see — since the 'symposium' failed, I ought to find another big word in its place. I think it was a hygienic discourse on the art of being beautiful."

Mrs. Morgan laughed, and Margery ran to put away her work and prepare supper.

As for Maggie, she sat in the place where Margery left her, with her mind full of confused thoughts, until the sharp notes of the six o'clock factory whistles broke in upon her revery and reminded her of her father's unprepared supper. Then she rose and went about her task with a strange feeling inside — a sense of new life and purpose stirring within her. What it was she did not know. She had never before felt thus. But I think that I know what it was. Margery's magic key of love had gained her an entrance through the door of the heart to the girl's soul.

Do you know what that means, girls? Think about it a little before you read on. Such an entrance may come to mean — with God ever waiting to do his part — that strange, mysterious thing which we call the "new birth" — the leading forth of a soul from the dark prison house of ignorance and sin into the glorious light of the Sun of Righteousness; into the "liberty wherewith Christ has made us free." What think you, dear girls, you who count yourselves disciples of Jesus Christ? To gain such an emergence for one single soul, what price would you be willing to pay? Would the labor and self-denial of one summer vacation be too much? To work in Margery's way may not be given to you. But avenues to human souls are as numberless as God's infinite heart is great. Are you asking him to show you one?

## CHAPTER XIV.

### MARGERY MEETS A FRIEND.

IT was the last Sunday in July. The heat during the week had been intense and Margery's duties no lighter. Nora, under the influence of Bob Stark, who was around whenever he could escape his mother's wringer, had been such an embodiment of all that was mischievous that Mrs. Morgan had threatened twice to send her off. Margery, however, thinking not only of the pay, but of Mrs. O'Finnegan's place, had begged her off, and insisted on trying her longer. Accordingly she had exerted herself to the utmost to plan new amusements for the children, and had even overcome self far enough to give them one more day in the park — this time wearing no veil, restoring the daisies to her hat, and personally superintending Nora's dress, — which, by some contributions from her own trunk, she rendered quite presentable, — and inviting Maggie Dart to join them.

Margery's wish to part with some of her extra flesh was being quite rapidly granted, for all her clothes were a size too large, and Mrs. Morgan felt troubled at seeing the color gradually leave her face and a tired look rest so often upon it.

"If only they were not so far away, I should call Gertrude home and send you directly to your parents, Margery," she said one day. "You are so determined to do it all that I am afraid you will break down before the other month is up. You are not used to it, you see, and it wears on you."

"I am glad they are so far away, then," said Margery bravely; "for I hate so to fail in anything I undertake! And I think you will see, Mrs. Morgan, that I 've a good deal of strength left when the first of September comes. Of course I am tired sometimes, but it is only what papa calls a 'good, healthy tired.'"

Mrs. Morgan shook her head. "I wish I was sure of it," she said.

"Anyway, dear Mrs. Morgan, you will promise me that, no matter what happens, you won't write anything about me that will worry mother or spoil the pleasure of the trip for *anybody*. If you should even hint to Gertrude that I was not standing the work well, her pleasure would be gone in a minute, you know; and besides it could do no good."

"Yes, I promise," said Mrs. Morgan thoughtfully. "As you say, it could do no good, for your mother would not let Gertrude come unless she came with her."

"No, indeed, she would not; and that would just break up the whole party. Besides, I must insist that I don't need them. Of course I feel the heat — we all do; but it 's only a few weeks more."

This conversation made Margery aware of an added burden to her responsibility — the task of hiding her weariness and discouragements still more closely from Mrs. Morgan. Perhaps this was, in some respects, the hardest of all, so unaccustomed was she to self-repression.

On this Sunday morning Margery awoke with a dull pain in her head, and, I am afraid, a still duller one at her heart. At least it was a vague, undefined one. She would not own it was homesickness, but she felt miserably low-spirited and lonely. It required all the resolution she could muster to be pleasant and social with the boys about their dressing. She was heartily thankful that Nora was absent over Sunday. She wished

Mrs. Morgan would laugh once in a while, and wear something besides black. She was sorry oatmeal was cheap and healthful: she was sick of the sight of the oatmeal boiler every morning at breakfast. She wanted one of mamma's dainty Sunday morning meals, with fresh raspberries and cream, delicate white rolls, and a glass of yellow Jersey milk just out of the refrigerator. In short, I'm afraid our usually merry-hearted Margery was suffering that morning from an attack which in an older person would have been called nervous prostration, but of course girls of sixteen do not have nerves.

So the sultry morning wore wearily away, and the time for chapel service drew near. How she wished she need not go! But there was her Sunday-school class, and she was not ill. What excuse could she make for absenting herself? and if she did, Mrs. Morgan would question her and — No; she certainly must go. With a feeling of unconquerable languor she dressed herself and made but a sorry toilet. I fear that no one used to the sight of pretty Margery Mayne as she used to trip down the steps of her father's house, clad in the purest white, dainty from the top of her stylish hat to the toe of her fine kid boots, a bunch of fresh tea roses or great golden-hearted pansies or fragrant blue violets in her belt — I fear no one used to this sight, I say, would have recognized her this afternoon. Her dress, it is true, was white, but she had worn it twice before, and she was now her own laundress. Her boots were getting shabby, and she had not the courage to go up town for a new pair. Anyway, they would *do* here. It was too hot, she told herself, for gloves, and scarcely any one at chapel wore them; and her hands were showing very decided signs of toil. She was too tired to curl her hair, so it was coiled close on the top of her head, which, under the little turban she chose to wear, gave her, together with her unwonted pallor, the appearance of having added at least ten years to her age.

She had already taken her seat by her class, when the young minister, who was also superintendent, entered the room. A lady accompanied him, at sight of whom Margery started suddenly, flushed with pleasure, then began to look with dismay at her rumpled dress and her bare, red hands. The lady was Miss Gail, to whom you have already been introduced as the president of the Christian Endeavor Society. As they were nearing the church the minister was saying to Miss Gail,—

"Yes, it has been hard to secure proper help in the school; but there is a young lady staying in the neighborhood here who has been invaluable help for a few weeks past. She teaches a class of boys, and helps wonderfully in the singing. She has a particularly sweet voice, and, what is somewhat peculiar — meeting her here, you understand — is that, for a young voice, it is so well trained. Help of this kind from their own class is indeed rare in mission schools. I must introduce you to her. She puzzles me somewhat — shows such gentle breeding, and yet brings with her some very poorly dressed children."

Miss Gail smiled. "Do the rich, then, have a patent on gentle manners?" she said.

"Oh, not exactly that, of course; but then you know how these people usually are. You have had a good deal of experience in mission schools, Miss Gail."

"Yes," said Miss Gail reflectively; "I know."

"Ah! she is here now," said the minister as they entered the chapel. "It is early yet. Let me introduce you now. You can select the hymns with her, as you and she will form my choir."

"Miss Mayne, I wish to introduce"— But he got no farther, for Margery sprang from her seat, forgetting all decorum, and, catching Miss Gail's hand in both her own, cried impulsively:—

"O *dear, dear* Miss Gail! however did you come here? Oh, I 'm so glad! You don't know how glad!—even," she added suddenly, with a laugh that belonged to the old Margery, "even if my hands are just as red and ugly as they can be!" Then, remembering all at once the presence of the minister and the place of their meeting, the color flew to her face, and she sat down covered with confusion.

"Never mind, Margery," said Miss Gail; "Mr. White will pardon us for taking his introduction out of his hands. He was speaking of you as we came in, but had failed to mention your name, so that the surprise was mutual. I am sure that he is happy to know that we are old friends."

"Most happy indeed, I assure you. But," aside to Miss Gail, "the mystery grows."

"Explanations will keep," answered she, smiling.

"But how *did* you happen to come here?" questioned Margery. "You of all persons the one I most wanted to see—excepting mamma," she added.

"Yes, of course, excepting mamma. Why, the answer to that question is very simple. This is one of the schools where I regularly teach, only I have been out of town for a month."

Mr. White bowed and withdrew to his desk. Miss Gail and Margery continued their conversation a few moments in whispers, for the people were coming in.

"Your mother told me all about it, Margery, and gave me your address. I was going to look you up to-morrow. I only returned yesterday. It was brave of you to do it, dear." She was going to add, "Only I am sorry to see you look so pale," but she decided not to say it. There are some people who think before they speak. Miss Gail was one of them.

"That is just like mamma," said Margery, choking back the tears. "She knew I would need some one to go to while she was gone. How comfortable it is to have you by me! only you must not hear me teach my class. They are positively dreadful, Miss Gail, and I have to do all sorts of improper things to keep them quiet."

"I shall not hear you; I have a class of my own. I am glad you are learning to teach, Margery; you can do much good. Now I must go;

but I will see you again after service, and we will make an appointment for a future meeting. Good-by."

Mrs. Morgan hardly knew Margery when she came home that afternoon, she was so light-hearted — so like her old self. The sight of it brought a smile to her own face, and when Margery bade the boys good-night, Fred begged a second kiss and said: —

"You 're just like you used to be, to-night, an' I love you twenty dollars."

Then Margery realized how she had back-slidden, and was almost glad that she had four weeks more to retrieve herself in. So seesaw-y was our Margery's disposition that the sight of Miss Gail had removed her from the Slough of Despond to the top of the Delectable Mountains. She headed her entry in the diary that night: "A friend in need is a friend indeed."

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE NATIVE.

IF Margery had needed any further "bracing up" after her interview with Miss Gail on that last July Sunday, she would have found it in the packet of letters that came to her in the Monday morning's mail. Perhaps, after all, nothing did really put new courage into her so much as the letters from Colorado, especially Gertrude's, which continued to breathe forth such rare and perfect enjoyment of her outing that Margery always laid them down with a lighter heart, and took up her daily burden with renewed zeal.

Mother, of course, wrote every week; Harry and Gertrude whenever they were "moved" to write; Dr. Mayne, Ted, and Dot rarely. This time both Harry and Gertrude were "moved" to write, and I have a mind to give you a peep over Margery's shoulder, at the risk of being impolite.

"THE DIVIDE," Col., July —.

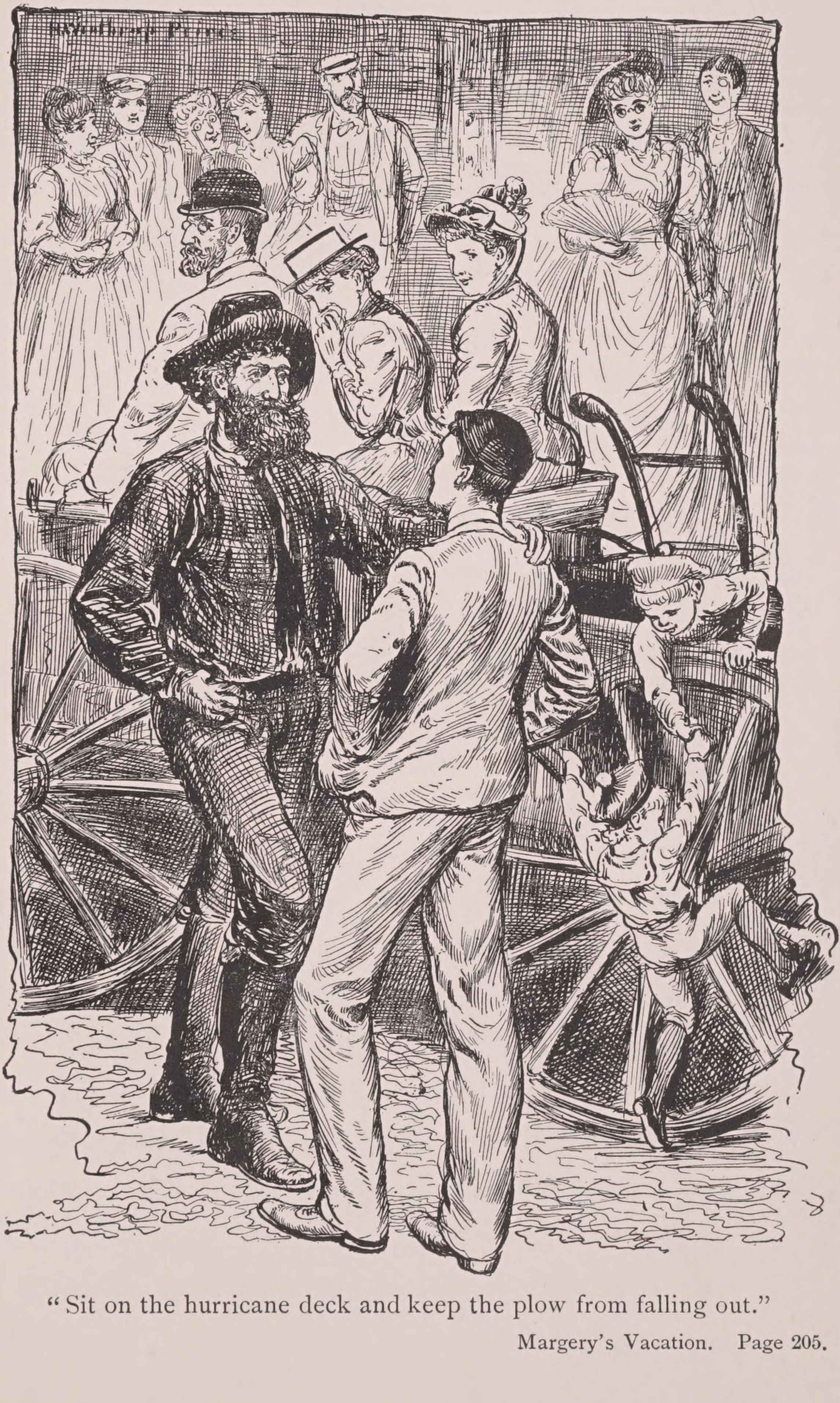
*Dear Kit,* — We have found the native, and are at present reveling in his hospitality. And we did n't have to go camping in search of him either. We put out no advertisements, we offered no bait, but he dropped unexpectedly into our midst. It happened thus: We had been for another look at Cheyenne Cañon, preparatory to leaving Colorado Springs for our second headquarters in Denver. We had taken in a stock of grandeur, etc., which we thought would last us until we reached the new cañon or peak, or whatever it might be, had fished Ted and Dot out of the creek for about the third or fourth time and set them on the rocks to dry in the sun (which, by the way, if you happen to be in one of these "cool" cañons at midday, is the work of just three and one-half minutes — an extra half-minute resulting in a conflagration). We had done this, I say, and, having consigned our sardine boxes, etc., to the stream, we entered our carryall and drove homeward, sitting in the most approved tourist fashion behind immense bunches of columbines, ferns, and other woodland fixings.

Arrived at the South End drinking fount, our driver decided to water his horses before leaving us at our hotel, thinking, no doubt, that — also after the manner of tourists — we should feel that the longer we occupied his vehicle the nearer we came to getting our money's worth. Some one was ahead of us at the fountain, or perhaps I should have said some*thing;* for what was visible to the naked eye at first sight was this: a big farm wagon with a box of green, two front wheels of red, one hind one of blue, and one of white. Attached to this rather unique conveyance were two horses — one black, majestic in stature and lavish in the matter of ears, and the other a sorrel broncho with white mane and tail, whose head when held erect reached nearly to the back of his companion. The harness appeared to be composed of odds and ends, in the uniting of which hemp twine and baling wire were the chief fastenings. I forgot to mention that a set of uncovered wagon bows topped off the box, and in the back of it lay a plow and the canvas cover for the wagon.

Seated on a board across the box was all that from our point of view was visible of the owner of the "outfit" (that 's western and means all the persons and things belonging to one — to one — well, to one *outfit* — there!), namely: the rear of a suit of brown duck, overalls and "jumper," — that 's western for blouse, — a mat of curly brown hair, and a broad-brimmed Panama hat. When they backed away from the fountain and we drove up, the "owner of the outfit" looked up and showed us a middle-aged man with sunburned face, nearly covered with a reddish-brown beard. He started to drive on, then turned and took a good look at father, who was on the front seat with the driver. Then, suddenly checking his horses, he called out:—

"Hello, Mayne! How came you to leave your pill boxes long enough to get out here?"

Father started, stared a moment in blank astonishment, then, with the quickest move I ever saw him make, sprang from the carriage, and, the next thing we knew, was in the lumber wagon shaking the man's hand as though he would wring it off. They talked a few moments earnestly, then father motioned our driver to bring us up alongside the wagon while he introduced us all round. It seems the man was a classmate of father's in college, and they were once quite intimate friends, but had drifted apart and lost all track of each other. It seems strange to me that they should recognize each other so readily after all these years. I remember hearing father speak of him often. His name is Hewett — Jack Hewett, father always called him, and he



"Sit on the hurricane deck and keep the plow from falling out."

Margery's Vacation. Page 205.

says he took the class honors when they graduated, but he was always an "odd stick," as the boys called him; and here he is, settled on a Colorado ranch raising potatoes and oats, and keeping a little stock. Father wanted him to come to the hotel with us, where they could talk over old times.

"Could n't think of it, Mayne; could n't possibly. I must get home to-night, and it 's a good twenty miles to the old 'Divide.' Besides, I 'm almost too stylish to be loafing around with tourists — might be taken for one myself. But, say, old man, what 's to hinder you all coming home with me? If you 're in the scenery line, we have some up our way that 's not so slow, even if it is n't ticketed yet. Accommodations may be a little different from The Antlers, but they 're *free*, and the old lady would be delighted to see you. She takes rather more to scenery folks than I do, as a rule."

"I should like it of all things," said father; "but we are quite a large party, and I 'm afraid it would be imposing on your wife's hospitality."

"Not a bit; 't would be a diversion to her. You see, she does n't get out very much, and she is uncommonly fond of society — especially of your kind."

"But would you have room for us all?"

"There's all the 'Divide.' If that isn't room enough, why, that's the best I can do. But come along. I know these youngsters are just dying to get away from so much style, and to have a good run with the calves and colts. My turnout isn't stylish, but I can stow you all in; and that just reminds me that the old lady told me to be sure and remember to get a spring seat. She's getting above riding on a board. If you want a little time to fix up your traps to take along, I'll go and see about the seat and come around for you. What hotel did you say? Antlers? All right; I'll send up my card in half an hour or so. Get up, Jericho!" to the broncho; "go on, Jumbo!" to the black horse; and he was off before we could make any decision.

Of course mother objected at first. Such a sudden thing, she said — and what a shame to surprise Mrs. Hewett so! But father was bent on going, and of course the youngsters were crazy about it, and Gertrude said, What a lark it would be! (You've no idea, Kit, how improper Gertrude is getting since she has associated with me.) And *I* was the only one in the family who could see any impropriety in having the somewhat conspicuous rig I have described to you drive up to the door of The Antlers and the "Dr. Mayne party" embark therein for an excursion to the unknown "Divide." But as I was on a search for the "native," I subdued all my pride and resignedly made my preparations.

"The ridiculous boy!" said Margery. "I know he was crazier to go than any of them."

Well, at the appointed time our friend arrived at the hotel, and created quite a sensation among some of the guests who were seated on the piazza. Father was there to welcome him and in a few moments we were on our way. The spring seat, glorious in red and green paint, was there, upon which mother and Gertrude were mounted. Father was invited to a seat beside the driver on his board. The back of the wagon was filled in with straw—pointing to which and addressing me, Mr. Hewett said with the utmost gravity:—

"You and the other kids will have to sit on the hurricane deck and keep the plow from falling out."

Now, Margery, I leave it to you if that was n't a little *too* much! Just fancy *me* seated on a straw mow in the back of that multicolored vehicle (from Latin *multus* — many — you understand) in company with Ted and Dot and a plow! and all that row of folks on the hotel porch looking at me, and Gertrude cramming her handkerchief into her mouth to keep from laughing aloud, and even mother with a wicked twinkle in her eye. Yes, and there was that yellow-haired, blue-eyed doll of a Miss Seymour, who has been making eyes at me ever since we were here, standing right by the door in her blue silk flummery, laughing at me behind her fan! But father sat on his board as much at home as if he had ridden in such rigs all his life, serenely unconscious of anything peculiar in our appearance and talking away to Mr. Hewett about college days.

As for Margery, she laid down the letter at this point and laughed till the tears rolled down her cheeks, and thought wickedly that this was almost as good as her day in the park.

Harry went on with several pages more describing the ride to the "Divide," which proved, he said, to be the watershed between the Arkansas and Platte rivers, and the great potato region of

Colorado. Then he described their arrival at the ranch : —

At last we came to a gate in a grove of pine trees, which we passed through, and drew up to a long, low house of hewn logs, with a *silver plate* bearing the name of Hewett on the door!

"I don't think you need say anything about *style*, Jack," said father, laughing. "I have n't arrived at the dignity of a doorplate yet in my city home."

Mr. Hewett laughed his peculiar, quiet, little laugh. "We saved that," he said, "with a few other things out of the Chicago fire, and the old lady thought it would give *tone* to our primitive residence, so she tacked it on."

"You were in the Chicago fire, then?"

"Yes; it cleaned us out pretty well. I was in the furniture business, and it had good material to work on. That gave me an excuse to come out here and take a claim. I 'd always had a hankering for that kind of life, but the old lady kind of hung to city ways. She was brought up that way, you see."

I think we all felt curious about the "old lady," and I for one had fancied her a fat, easy-going, gray-haired matron in a blue check apron. Imagine my astonishment, then, when we were received by a slender, golden-haired lady, in appearance scarcely over thirty, though she must of course be older than that if she was a woman grown at the time of the Chicago fire. She was strikingly handsome, and dressed in as perfect taste as any city lady I ever saw, and you 'll remember she was not expecting company either. She received us with the utmost grace and courtesy, making us feel at once that our coming was a special favor to her. And the inside of that *log* house! The walls were of whitewashed hewn logs, the ceiling of muslin stretched across, but on the floor of the sitting room was a Brussels carpet; on the whitewashed walls hung rare paintings and etchings. A bookcase of native pine occupied nearly the whole space of one end of the room, and was filled to overflowing with choice books. There was a piano, a stand of house plants, a canary bird, and I can't tell you what else. But it was one of the cheeriest home-comfort rooms I was ever in. A big center table was full of newspapers and the latest magazines, and I fancy Mr. Hewett is an inveterate reader. His hands seem to wander involuntarily to the papers even when he is talking, and he seems wonderfully well-posted in current events. Father is completely enchanted. He says this is the way to enjoy life. There are three other rooms in the house — two bedrooms and a big kitchen, which is also the dining room. I wondered where they would "sleep" us all. But there seemed to be not the least trouble. A bed on the floor in the spare room for Ted and Dot — father and mother, of course, occupying that room; a bed lounge in the sitting room for Gertrude; and for your humble servant a tent! — a "really-truly" tent, as Dot would say. Don't you think I 'm paid for all I suffered in mortified vanity? What a letter I am spinning out — particulars enough for a *girl's* letter. And I have n't said *half* I want to; but I 'll tell you the rest when I see you. Anyway, papa's friend is a "brick." I could fill pages with his droll sayings. He keeps us laughing constantly, but makes not the slightest pretense at being funny; and in spite of his "butternuts," which he wears all the time, is not a bit rough. I 'm afraid we shall have to "do" Denver in a hurry, for we shall have hard work to tear father away from this "happy valley" — or hill, rather.

Pike's Peak is in plain sight, and there is a hill on the ranch from which can also be seen Long's Peak and the Snowy Range. If you survive this, I 'll tell you more of our new friends in my next. Yours, HARRY.

P. S. — To make my letter still more like a girl's it must have a postscript. It turns out that Mrs. Hewett has a phaëton and pony for her own use, and Mr. Hewett must have bought that spring seat on purpose for mother's comfort.

# CHAPTER XVI.

## MOTHER'S LETTER.

AFTER reading Harry's and Gertrude's letters to Mrs. Morgan (the latter was a rhapsody on the scenery and flowers of the wonderful "Divide"), Margery went to her room with another one in her hand as yet unread. It was her mother's — the long-expected answer to her appeal in regard to Maggie Dart. As you have read the appeal, it is but fair that you should also have the response: —

*My dear little Daughter,* — Your letter about Maggie Dart has just reached me in time for my reply to go in the family budget. Harry and Gertrude are both writing this time, so that I will leave details of our unexpected change of program, and our present delightful situation, to them. I think I never saw your father enjoy himself more thoroughly than he does here, and as for Ted and Dot, their happiness can find expression only in perpetual motion. They are busy explorers all day long — "prospectors," Mr. Hewett calls them — and come in at twilight dirty and tired, with pockets full of pine cones, withered flowers, and "*specimuns,*" as they have learned to call the various pretty-colored stones and pebbles which abound throughout this Rocky Mountain region. Sometimes there is a really nice stone in their collections. Yesterday, for instance, I sorted out from a mass of white quartz and granite chips a very clear carnelian, a milky opal, and a bunch of tiny quartz crystals. Wood agates and flints are common, and Mr. Hewett has quite a collection of Indian arrowheads which he has plowed up in his fields. Dot is more interested in the flowers. She follows Gertrude untiringly in her botanizing walks — for the matter of that, so does Harry. She wished me this morning to hurry up her dressing. "I has to have such a lots of time to pick Gertie's f'owers," she said. Yesterday we missed her at dinner time, and I found her sitting under a pine tree with a big book, resembling Gertrude's manual, open on her lap, and Gertrude's floral microscope in hand. She had a bunch of field sunflowers by her side. Holding a single flower in her hand, she looked at it critically through the glass, then began pulling it in pieces leaf by leaf, stopping occasionally to reëxamine some part with the glass. Now and then she would turn a leaf in the book, peer at the printed page with a look of owl-like wisdom, nod her head confidently, and proceed with the dissection of her flower. It was so funny — the perfect mimicry of it — that I called Gertrude to see her before I interrupted her botanical investigations and recalled her from her imaginary study to the more sordid theme of dining. She responded with alacrity, however, and I am sure that Mrs. Hewett's custard pie, and a generous dish of wild strawberries with real *dairy* cream, more than recompensed her for the intellectual loss. It will seem strange to you to think of strawberries late in July, but this "Divide" is really a mountain altitude and the seasons are correspondingly late. For instance, haying is in progress here now, and Mr. Hewett says their grain harvest is in August and sometimes even encroaches on September.

But about Maggie Dart. I must not forget that she was to be the chief theme of my letter. Like yourself, dear, I wish heartily that I could talk it over with you instead of writing. I am wondering, as I sit here, what you will have already done in the weeks that will have elapsed when my message reaches you.

I feel sure you will have made a good beginning, and I have no doubt that you and the strange, untaught girl you describe are even now on friendly terms. I am so glad you remembered about the "key of love." Don't worry, daughter, about the "rusty lock." No lock ever gets so rusty but that with *God's* help the key will easily turn. Don't forget that. *We* only make the *motions:* it is God who gives the strength.

Your idea of furnishing her with good reading is excellent. I could not suggest a better one. Only I think I would not take her to the public library just yet, if you have not already done so. Better go yourself and bring her such books as you know are interesting and *good.* If, as it seems from what you tell me, her taste for sensational novels is somewhat developed, she will be sure, if left to make her own selection, to pick out just that sort of books, and you know, daughter, what an ample supply of such trash our library affords. Sometimes, on that account, I am almost led to question its real good to the public. However, as I say, you can find much that is really excellent and at the same time entertaining. If she likes Little Women, you can do no better than to follow it up with more of Miss Alcott, or with Mrs. Whitney. Take, for instance, A Summer in Leslie Goldthwaite's Life. What better companions could you give to a thoughtful girl — and evidently, from her shrewd sayings, she is thoughtful — than dear Miss Craddock and earnest, sweet-tempered Leslie? To one with her passion for reading, all her book characters are real people, and through such means you can introduce her, in spite of her dirt and bad manners, into the most refined and improving society of the land. Such an introduction is better than sermons — yes, for *her*, better than Scripture texts or Sunday-school lessons. She is full, poor girl, of the idea of a settled hostility between rich and poor, between educated and ignorant folk: between your class and hers; a misunderstanding very common to ignorant people, and which has its origin, strange as it may seem at first thought, in the unrecognized struggle of every human soul toward the light — toward a higher plane of living. Maggie's very ridicule of what she is pleased to consider your "fine airs" is a sign that she recognizes an atmosphere of life different from hers and into which, if she only knew her own heart, she secretly longs to enter. Bring her, then, through the books, into this higher circle of Christian culture and Christ-like living, and then, if you can win her heart, be to her the living realization of her book dreams.

Do I ask a great deal, my little Margery? Mother knows, and God knows, how difficult it is to be always "living witnesses" for Him. But you can *try*, and if you sincerely do that he will open ways for you. He has already given you a great gift, my daughter, — it can do you no harm for mother to say it to you in this way, — the gift of being attractive, of winning friends easily. Did you ever think, dear, that this was a gift to be consecrated to the Master? It is a rare gift, Margery, and one to thank him for, if only it is used aright.

I feel so sure that you have ere this found a way to win Maggie that anything I could suggest for *beginning* your acquaintance with her would be useless. But for carrying it on, how would it do to ask her to join you in your Sunday morning Bible stories with Walter and Fred? Of course I sympathize with Mrs. Morgan in her wish to have the boys as little with her as possible, but in company with you, and for such a purpose, I do not think she would object.

The roots of a plant may penetrate ever so dank and rotten a soil when the purpose is to take its elements and transform them into its own beautiful stem, leaf, and flower, and be not only unharmed but benefited thereby. This is a little *seed thought* for you, daughter: preach your own sermon to yourself from the text, when you have a quiet hour to think about it.

Let me know all about your successes and failures with Maggie, and if, when I have had time to consider the matter more, I think of other suggestions, I will write at once. And now, dear little daughter, once more good-by. You know how mother's heart longs every day for the sight of you, how tempted I am to shorten my visit and come to you. And yet, when I see the health tints deepening in Gertrude's face, and the joy of ease and plenty and gratitude and pleasant companionship lighting up her hitherto sad countenance, I thank God every day that he blessed me with a daughter having a heart loving enough and a purpose firm enough to do this sweet act of Christian charity. And while it pleases me to see Gertrude so happy, I 'm comforted by the thought that, in spite of weariness and loneliness, — and sometimes homesickness, — Margery is happier still, because I know, dearest, that it *is* "more blessed to give than to receive."

MOTHER.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### NORA.

WHEN Margery laid aside her letters and prepared to begin the work of the day she found Nora sitting pensively by the kitchen window watching the boys, who were engaged in a lively game of marbles in the shade of the coal house. She had just arrived, and was holding her sunbonnet in hand in a listless way that was very unlike her usual boyish manner; for, as I have before hinted, Margery had long since discovered that the depths of serenity she at first fancied she saw in the child's clear blue eyes were but treacherous depths. She had seen lightning flashes of passion play over their surface till they seemed fairly to scintillate. She had seen sullen clouds of obstinacy darken them, and, worse than all, Nora had once fastened them full upon her face, and with a gaze which for apparent truthfulness and purity of purpose a martyr at the stake might have envied her, had made statements that Margery had reason to know at the time were wholly false, and that Nora also knew them to be such. When confronted with her falsehood in such a way that no loophole of denial could be made available, she burst into a storm of tears and, calling on sundry saints to forgive her, — particularly her especial patron, Saint Michael, — told Margery, "Indade and indade, miss, I niver towld aught but the truth before — *niver* — an' the divil himself (bad luck to 'im!) must 'a' been afther me sowl whin I said it." Then she proceeded to enumerate sundry dread calamities which she hoped might come to her if ever she was guilty of the like again, until Margery stopped her, telling her it was wicked to talk in that way, and that the best way to convince people of her repentance was by her actions ; and she promised not to tell her mother if she were always truthful in future.

Then Nora, again invoking the saints, this time in behalf of the "swate young lady," declared her overwhelming gratitude for the promise, and went on to state how the heart of her poor "mither would be broke intoirely if she knew it," etc.

But Mrs. Morgan smiled a somewhat cynical smile, and remarked to Margery in an undertone that probably Mrs. O'Finnegan herself seldom told the truth when a falsehood would serve her purpose. Margery, innocent, unsuspecting Margery, was quite shocked at the remark; but we will do her judgment the credit to allow that she took Nora's future statements with allowance.

She kept her liking for the strange little child, notwithstanding all these serious defects, and when she came to see more of her mother she wondered if, after all, Nora was so much to blame. And she earnestly hoped she might do something toward correcting these evil tendencies. Poor Margery had not yet learned how easy it is to go down when the prevailing wind is that way, and how hard to go up with only a slight counter-current to assist. But no such counter-current is useless, nevertheless.

"Good-morning, Nora," said Margery brightly. "Why are you so sober this morning? Are you not feeling well?"

"Sure, thin, ma'am, it 's not ill that I am, but me legs got uncommon tired with the comin' this mornin', an' me head 's that light if I had a sthring to it I could use it for a koite, ma'am."

Margery laughed.

"I think we don't need any more kites," she said; "and perhaps if you will lie on the lounge a little while your head will feel better. The sun is hot these mornings, and maybe you walked a little too fast. Did you have a good breakfast before you started?"

"I was not afther wantin' to ate at all this mornin'. The pork went all ag'in me, an' the praties was in the pork, so a crust o' bread an' a bit o' toddy was all I could git l'ave to swaller, ma'am."

Margery shuddered. Pork and potatoes and *toddy* on a morning like this, when the thermometer stood above eighty degrees in the shade and not a breath of air was stirring! And cooked in the same room where it was eaten besides! How *could* any one be decent-tempered and truthful and live that way?

Again the tempter came to her with the question, How can the poor be Christians? Yes, Margery, the odds are very much against them, but the promise, remember, is to "him that overcometh," and "these are they which came out of great tribulation." Margery was going to ask her if she would not like a glass of milk; then she bethought herself of the small pint that must do for the whole family all day; and besides there was no ice, and if the pint of milk did not sour before tea time they were lucky.

"Could you eat a piece of toast and drink a cup of tea, if I fixed them for you?"

"Sure an' I could, ma'am, an' be glad of it; but it 's the throuble I 'll be afther makin' you," said this suddenly considerate child.

Margery felt sure she must be ill if she stopped to think of the trouble. She made the toast and tea, however, but, delicate as it was, it was but a small portion of it that Nora could "git l'ave to swaller," and she lay most of the time on the lounge, or sat quietly watching Mrs. Morgan at her sewing, for the rest of the day, eating scarcely any dinner. At six o'clock, when her mother called for her, she was so flushed and feverish that both Mrs. Morgan and Margery felt troubled about her, and Mrs. Morgan advised her mother to give her herb tea and a hot footbath before putting her to bed. They were not much surprised when the next morning she failed to come, and as soon as the morning work was over Margery went to inquire about her. She found her sick abed with a burning fever, moaning in a half delirium, while Mrs. O'Finnegan sat wringing her hands and calling on the saints, and trying every now and then to force a spoonful of "that dreadful toddy" (so Margery called it to Mrs. Morgan) down her burning throat.

"Won't she have water?" said Margery, who saw no signs of any about.

"Sure, miss, and it 's the wather she 'll be bound to have, poor thing!"

"And why don't you give it to her?"

"Wather! when she 's that hot, miss? Sure the death of her it would be indeed. If she 'd but take the toddy, indeed 't would hearten her."

Margery's impulse was to cry out against the ignorance that refused cold water to a fever-stricken sufferer, but she restrained herself and said gently: —

"Why, Mrs. O'Finnegan, my father is a doctor, you know, and he went all through the fever last summer and lost but one case, and I 've often heard him say, 'Give them all the cold water they want, and ice.' Yes, indeed, Mrs. O'Finnegan, bits of ice to swallow. Oh, please let me get a drink for poor little Nora!" And without waiting for an answer she ran into the next room and returned with a cup of the coolest water she could find, which was not saying much.

"Of course," she said, "if your father 's the docther — but I 'd rayther she had the toddy — I 'd a deal rayther" — shaking her head dubiously.

"Have you sent for the doctor?"

"The docther is it? An' sure, thin, where 'd the loikes o' me git money for the docther? What with the rint an' the clothes an' the coal an' the mate an' the bread an' the praties — to say naything o' the hire for the care o' me chile, an' the wages that small" —

Margery had no patience to hear her through.

"But there 's the city physician," she said, "can be had free. I know where to send for him, and I 'll run over immediately and send Bob Stark for him — I 'm sure Bob will go, and" —

Mrs. O'Finnegan fairly shouted, "An' it 's the *charity* she thinks I 'll be afther takin'! An' me an honest an' dacent woman who pays me debts, an' *hires* the loikes o' you to mind me brat! Thin I tells ye to your face I 'll have none of it, an' it be a docther must be had for me Nora, I 'll pay him ivery *cint!* ivery *cint!* do ye hear? if I worruk the very nails from me finger ends for it. Let them as lives in the slums take the charity — but I 'll" —

How much longer she might have gone on in this way I cannot tell, if Margery had not broken in upon her tirade by saying, —

"Of course you can pay him, if you wish, Mrs.

O'Finnegan; but Nora is very sick, and if you do not have a doctor she may die. If you will name any other physician you would rather have, and give me his address, I will send for him. This is the fever season, you know, and any neglect of Nora's case now might be very serious."

At this Mrs. O'Finnegan burst into tears and began swaying back and forth and shrieking that her "darlint" would die — and not even the "praste" to confess her — and begging Margery to call the "praste" and get any "docther she plazed," and so on, in another tantrum.

Margery, now thoroughly frightened at Mrs. O'Finnegan's behavior, — for a glance at the black bottle beside the glass of toddy had given her a sudden thought, — ran hurriedly out, saying she would be back in a few minutes when she had sent for the doctor. She went directly home to consult Mrs. Morgan, her mind in a tumult of conflicting emotions. She wanted to stay and take care of Nora, who had recognized her in the midst of her incoherent talk and kept begging her for more water. But there was her duty to Mrs. Morgan, and she knew that her burdens were now all that she could bear. If only some one could be found to stay with Nora, and Mrs.

O'Finnegan persuaded to go about her work as usual, it would be so much better for the child, she thought. Oh, why could not she be two people in one ! She had never imagined before that there was so much work to be done in the world and so few people to do it.

The result of her consultation with Mrs. Morgan was that the city physician was summoned at once and further arrangements deferred until his arrival. Mrs. Morgan herself would be present during his visit and see what could be done for them. Doctor Nesbitt was evidently no stranger to women of the O'Finnegan type, and had her well under control in a few moments, declaring positively against toddy and in favor of cold water in a way that made Margery rise at once in the estimation of Nora's mother, and gave her unbounded influence with her for the future.

When Mrs. Morgan returned to Margery, it was not a very hopeful story she had to tell.

"The doctor says it promises to be a serious case. I followed him out for a few words in private. Her system, he says, has been thoroughly prepared for the fever by a long-continued diet of the most unhealthful sort and the free use of her mother's favorite 'toddy' (no doubt this accounts for her dwarfed body). If she had proper nursing, she might pull through, but with such a mother — well, he shook his head dubiously."

"If I could only go to her and send her mother away to her work; I know very little about nursing, but I could do what the doctor ordered and — at least, I could keep sober," said Margery, with a comical look of disgust, mingled with anxiety.

"You could not do it, child: it would be too hard for you. I feel responsible for you to your parents, you know, and this might be a risk."

"Oh, there is nothing contagious in it, papa says, and my constitution has not been injured by bad diet; but I could not leave you, of course. It is you who are not able. Oh, I have it! I have my regular allowance, you know; papa insisted on leaving me that, though I told him I should not need it. I have spent scarcely any of it. I can hire a nurse for her if the doctor will find one who is good, and if Mrs. O'Finnegan takes another fit over the 'charity' she must not know that the woman is paid."

"The question will be to get Mrs. O'Finnegan to leave her. Even women of her sort have a kind of animal instinct which serves them in the place of motherhood."

"Trust me to manage that," said Margery cheerily, her spirits rising now that she saw a way out of her difficulty. "I will go over at once, with your permission, and see what I can do about it, and to-morrow we will see the doctor."

She found her task much harder than she anticipated, but finally, the next day, with Dr. Nesbitt's assistance she prevailed, and by night a nurse was installed and Mrs. O'Finnegan went about her usual work next morning, bemoaning the hard lot that forced her to leave her "darlint chile to the tender marcies of strangers while she toiled for the brid an' the drugs."

But Nora called so incessantly for Margery that every moment she could snatch from her daily duties was spent by her bedside. Sometimes, even, she would take her sewing or mending with her if she could not otherwise be spared. In vain Mrs. Morgan remonstrated. Margery could not resist the appeal of Nora's imploring eyes when she fastened them upon her and begged her for the love of the "blissed Vargin" to stay with her. One day — it was the tenth day of her illness — the nurse complained of such fatigue that Margery offered to take charge of Nora for the afternoon and let her go home for a brief rest.

Nora was sleeping when the nurse left her, but it was a fitful, uneasy sleep, and the fever still held her. She had been delirious by spells all day, the nurse said. She could not say whether she was better or worse; she seemed more quiet now. There was nothing to do for her but to give the medicine and drink and keep her head cool as possible and the flies from annoying her. Oh, these dreadful flies! How they buzzed and swarmed over everything! Margery plied the brush till her arms ached; then she spread the piece of fly net over the bed until Nora tossed and moaned and called for more air, and asked why they were shutting her up in that tight closet. Full of remorse for having interposed even that thin barrier between the sufferer and the small allowance of heated, impoverished air which surrounded her, she again took up the brush and began wearily swaying it. How slowly the hours crept along! She thought longingly of her cool, airy chamber, with its thick stone walls and closely drawn blinds shutting out the midday heat, its closely screened windows through which no stray fly ever came. If she could only place poor little Nora there in her clean, pretty bed! And it was so near — scarcely a mile away — and yet how far it seemed! And it was people who lived in homes like that who took summer vacations, who fled from the city's heat; and people who lived like *this* who stayed on and endured until — well, until the fever took them!

But this was a quiet, respectable quarter. There was another — oh, so much worse! — down where the tenements were; where the sun leaped back and forth from wall to wall of closely crowded blocks, and buried its scorching rays deep in the porous brick and mortar, from whence, when night came, they would creep forth fiendishly to rob the foul air about of every vestige of coolness! She had heard of these places and the unfortunates who lived there — but now! she thought of Gertrude's vehement outbreak against cities. That reminded her of grandma Burney's and the hammock. Oh, how deliciously it swayed! Gertrude was lying in one now, perhaps, under the pines of that far-away "Divide," in the cool mountain air. Mother was sitting near, talking to her. She could see her in her cool, white dress, with a flower in her beautiful, waving hair — mother's hair. There was a soft light in her eyes and a smile on her lips, but they were for Gertrude! And there was Harry coming toward them from one of those lovely, flower-strewn meadows that Gertrude told about. His arms were full of bright, sweet-scented blossoms, and he threw them in Gertrude's lap. A great, hot tear rolled slowly down Margery's cheek. She started and roused herself indignantly. What could she mean to feel that way! She was glad Gertrude was there — glad — glad — glad! She repeated it to herself stoutly, and began swaying her brush so violently that the sudden breeze made Nora start. It was a poplar branch she held in her hand. The rustling of the swaying leaves and the droning of a bee which had just wandered into the room sent her to grandma Burney's again, to the hammock and the orchard; and before she was conscious of how the heat and weariness were overcoming her she dropped off to sleep and the brush fell from her hand.

She had been sleeping for perhaps a half hour when she heard her name softly called, and answering, "Yes, grandma," she awoke with a start to see Nora lying still and white, with no trace of fever in her face and her great, blue eyes fixed upon her with a strange, wistful gaze.

She bent suddenly over her, in a tumult of fear and self-reproach.

"What is it, dear? Are you better? Here, take this drink of cool water. Oh, how could I go to sleep? Oh, how long the nurse stays away!" This last to herself, but unspoken.

Nora's voice brought her to herself and hushed for a moment the tumult within. It was so weak, so far away and strange, and yet so earnest, that she almost stopped her breath to listen.

"Miss Margery, plaze," it said, "tell me somethin' cool and swate like — somethin' about the country, perhaps, an' the trees an' the wather."

Margery could not tell why these words came to her. She was hardly sure whether she was saying them herself, or a voice from some unseen presence was saying them — the old, sweet words:

"'And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river was there the tree of life . . . and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. . . . And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. . . .

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.'"

Nora drew a long sigh. "All the water ye want, it means, and *no more toddy!*" she said faintly, and Margery went on, almost as one in a dream:

"'They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. . . . And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. . . . And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.'"

Nora had not taken her eyes from Margery's face while she spoke. The strange wistfulness of her gaze deepened, and her voice grew fainter and fainter as she murmured, "No more heat; no more heat."

Now Margery felt a vague alarm. What did this strange quiet mean? this deadly pallor of her face, this solemn, almost unearthly gaze, the faint, gasping breath? Was she going to die? And her mother was away! Oh, why did not the nurse come! She ought to let some one know, to get help, but she dared not leave her. Nora's hand was tightly clasping her own, and her eyes — those mute, appealing eyes! No, she could not leave her. She must do the best she could until some one came. Afterward she wondered that she was not afraid. She had never been in the presence of death, and now it seemed she was to be alone with it; but she thought only of Nora. Nora was trying to speak again. Margery bent her ear to listen.

"Raise me up, plaze."

Margery raised the slight, wasted child, and sitting on the edge of the bed held her in her arms. Nora laid her head on Margery's shoulder, still with her eyes upon her face.

"Sure," she murmured, "'t is the face of the blissed Vargin." Then slowly, "'T was the heaven ye was tellin' about, but now" —

"Yes, it was heaven," said Margery. "No more sickness; no more pain, you know."

"But there 's the purgatory!" said Nora, shuddering.

"No, no, no!" cried Margery vehemently. "There is no purgatory."

"But the praste" —

"Never mind the priest," said Margery; "*Jesus* says, 'Suffer the little children to come unto *me.*'"

Nora looked doubtful a moment; then her face suddenly cleared.

"'T is the face of the Vargin," she said, "and sure she knows." Then again, "But there 's the dark, dark river I hear 'em talk about."

"No," said Margery, scarce knowing what she said in her great desire to comfort Nora, "not a dark river — a beautiful, shining river; think, Nora — cool, clear, shining water, and Jesus to take us over. 'He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom.'"

Ah, Margery! it was something to have been taught Scripture texts from your childhood. What was it not worth now to have memorized Sunday-school lessons all your life!

Nora said no more, but the troubled look passed away, and she lay so quiet in Margery's arms that she could scarcely hear her breathe. There was a step outside: some one coming to the door. Margery's face brightened: then a sudden fear held her. If it should be Mrs. O'Finnegan! She had not been afraid to face death alone with Nora, but she was afraid of Nora's mother. There was a knock at the door. It was not she.

"Come in," said Margery softly, and there entered Miss Gail.

Margery gave a little cry of delight and motioned her to come forward. With one swift, compassionate look, Miss Gail comprehended it all. Nora's eyes were closed, and she heard nothing. Just a faint, fluttering breath told that she still lingered.

"Some one ought to go for her mother," whispered Margery. Miss Gail shook her head.

"It is too late, dear Margery. I am very glad I came; I will stay with you now."

In a few moments more they laid her down.

"It is better so," said Miss Gail gently. "'They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.'"

Margery's tears were falling fast, and she was trembling violently now, all her resolution gone.

"That was one of the verses I repeated for her, and — and it pleased her," said Margery, smiling through her tears.

"You are a brave girl, Margery. I doubt if many girls would have stayed by Nora under these circumstances, as you did."

"What else could I do?" she answered simply.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### A VISIT TO MISS GAIL.

MISS GAIL accompanied Margery home to Mrs. Morgan's that evening. It was not her first visit there. Since the meeting at the chapel Miss Gail had kept a watchful eye upon her, not alone because Mrs. Mayne had requested it, but because of a genuine respect for Margery's sincerity of purpose, and a love for the bright, fearless girl, who could brave the all-powerful "they say," for the sake of a Christian deed.

She had planned for a visit from Margery on the Wednesday following their first meeting, but this had been prevented by Nora's illness, for Margery would not spare any time which she could devote to her. Neither had Miss Gail urged her to do so, and both now felt that she was more than repaid for her self-devotement, when Nora was willing to trust her in spite of the priest — for whom she had entertained a lifelong fear, if not reverence; and as long as Margery lives there will hover around those beautiful verses of Revelation a sweet sanctity born of their power to comfort even a little child.

Now, Miss Gail felt that the time had come to take Margery away, for a day at least, from the scene, which for the last two weeks had been a sore strain upon her endurance. She had been a good soldier, she told Margery, and was now entitled to a furlough. Margery hesitated in spite of the fact that Mrs. Morgan's entreaties were added to Miss Gail's, with an assurance that no work was pressing, and she and the boys could get on nicely without her for at least a night and a day.

"There are things to be done yet for Nora," said Margery, shuddering a little, but nerving herself in a sort of extra-heroic style, which was the result of her overstrained nerves.

"Nothing for *Nora*, dear; only for the clay — remember that always. Her mother and the neighbors will attend to that. It is best you should come away with me now — so run and get your things."

Miss Gail spoke in a tone of such gentle command that Margery offered no further resistance. Besides, the mention of Nora's mother sent such a thrill of dread and disgust all through her that she felt as though she would willingly go anywhere to avoid meeting her. Then she reproached herself for the feeling, and honestly tried to be sorry for her.

And now as she shook out the pretty white mull, which had been so ingloriously abandoned on the day of her excursion to the park, thoughts came thronging upon her so rapidly that her head seemed to whirl, and she could hardly go on with her dressing. For a vision of Nora in her strange, ugly costume rose before her. A vision of her as she stood confronting her tormentor in the rattling, jolting car, with her eyes ablaze and her slight form quivering with impotent rage; then a vision of her as she saw her but an hour or two ago — the thin, transparent face, which seemed to be nothing but a setting for those great, appealing eyes — what was it all anyway? Where was she? What did it all mean, this strange, strange mystery of life and death? How old she felt! The burden of the universe seemed resting upon her shoulders, and everything was in a tangle and she must set it straight. And how could she? Oh, she was so tired! Her head throbbed, and all the passages about death she had ever heard went surging through her brain in endless procession. "Sown a natural body — raised a spiritual." Yes, in heaven, Nora would be nothing but eyes and wings — no freckles or pink sunbonnet. She could see her now — two great, luminous blue orbs attached in some invisible way to a pair of soft, undulating, white wings, floating in a sort of golden cloud mist which she supposed must be heavenly vapor. Then the verses came again and with them snatches of Sunday-school hymns —

> There is a happy land,
>   Far, far away,
> Where saints immortal stand —

Oh! then she was all wrong — they stood; and this Nora of the eyes and wings had no feet; and so it went on. She was dressed now, and looking about the room in a confused way to see if anything needed to be set to rights before she went away. Were the boys' clothes all right for tomorrow? Ought she not to see? But there was Miss Gail waiting for her, and it was past her tea hour now. Oh, dear! she ought not to go. And there were mamma's text cards — she ought to take the one for next morning with her; but oh! she was tired of *texts*. They would not let her rest now, and they were so confusing. However, she took up the card.

"Casting all your care upon *Him*, for he careth for *you*."

So her mother had underscored it, and had added, "Even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings."

Like a cool hand laid upon a fevered brow it calmed her for a moment, and she took up her parasol and gloves and went out to bid Mrs. Morgan and the boys good-night, and accompany Miss Gail.

When they arrived at Miss Gail's home, what do you think that lady did? Yes, I know you can guess. She said to Margery that she was tired out, and that her nerves were all unstrung, and what she needed was perfect rest. And she positively forbade her talking or thinking any more about Nora that night, and she ordered a tea for them set in the coolest corner of a vine-shaded veranda; and to take her mind from the events of the day she talked to her of her absent family, and tried to interest her in the plans for Christian Endeavor work after the vacation was over. And then she put her to bed very early with a tender command to go directly to sleep and be ready for a long talk on the morrow. Very well; you have guessed it all out, and it sounds very nice and natural, and I venture to say that something like this would have been done by the average lady in her place; but your guess is all wrong. She did not a single one of these things. This is what she really did. She bought tickets on their way home to the jubilee singers' concert, which she knew was to be given that night. She knew Margery's fondness for music, and she had been a girl once herself. She knew that if she forbade her to talk of Nora that she would think of nothing else. That if she were put to bed early she would lie awake and think excitedly into the small hours. And she said not a word to her about *nerves* or about being tired.

When they had taken off their things, she said:

"Now, Margery, we will go downstairs and see if they have left us a bite of supper. And we must make haste about it too, for we have barely time to dress for the concert, and I would not have you miss this one."

"O Miss Gail, am I to go to the concert? Why, I 've nothing to wear — not a thing."

Miss Gail smiled as she thought how quickly a girl's mind could be brought from the most serious themes to the subject of "what to wear," and in this particular case she was glad of it.

"You can wear what you have on very nicely. White is the prettiest thing a young girl can wear in summer, you know, and with a bunch of my pink tea roses and a fresh pair of gloves, which I can lend you, you are perfect. Do you see?"

"But my hat? You see, this is my last season's one. I did not bother about a new one when I knew I was going to retire to private life; and of course it's all out of style."

"Oh, we can easily fix that. That fine Leghorn is never out of style for a girl. All it wants is to be caught up on one side — so. No, not on one side, at the back. Not exactly that either — just between the side and the back. There, that is it! Look in the glass. Is not that perfect for your face? Now take off this trimming that you are tired of, and fasten on this lace scarf — so — leaving that space where it turns up for a bunch of the roses to match those you will wear in your corsage. While I am dressing, Christine shall do your hair. She is perfect at that. And yours is just the hair for her to revel in. She will make of it a most bewitching mass, neither curls, nor braids, nor frizzes, but an artistic combination of all three, which shall yet seem to be simplicity itself."

All through their hasty tea, Miss Gail kept up this light chitchat on dress and expected concert, in a manner which would have done credit to the average boarding school girl; and Margery listened in wonderment, and thought it strange that she had never known Miss Gail could be so jolly, and tried to make her thoughts return to Nora and the solemnities of the day, and then reproached herself for heartlessness because she could not readily do it. And, worse than all, so she said afterward to Miss Gail, she actually enjoyed the concert, and laughed as heartily at the funny parts as if she were under no obligation to be sober. And she went to bed at half past eleven, thinking of the music instead of Nora, and slept soundly until late next morning.

She awoke with a start, as one nearly always does after an unusually long or sound sleep, and with the unpleasant sensation of neglected duty consequent upon oversleeping one's regular time. Springing hastily from the bed with the sleep but half rubbed from her eyes, and the only thought in her mind being her usual morning thought of being dressed in time to help the boys, she was brought suddenly to a consciousness of her real surroundings by the touch of her feet on the soft velvet rug by her bedside. Starting suddenly, she looked around her in bewilderment for a moment; then, recalling where she was, she did such a silly thing that she blushed about it afterward when she told her mother (of course she resolved not to tell her at all, but of course, also, she was the more certain to do it on account of the resolve, because it kept her more in mind of the incident). She sat down on the beautiful rug and rubbed her feet back and forth over it, and patted and stroked it with her bare hand as lovingly as she would have petted her favorite white kitten, Floss; and as she sat thus stroking it, she thought, with a dismal little shiver, of the harsh, ugly feel of the half-cotton ingrain at Mrs. Morgan's! "But only two weeks more," she said to herself, "and then" — The homesick feeling came back as she thought of the home comforts awaiting her, and then arose once more the image of Gertrude. She was to go back to luxury and Gertrude return to her poverty. Would the ingrain feel harsher to her because she had trodden for two months upon velvet? Was it right, anyway, this difference in the way people lived? When she had suggested this to Gertrude, Gertrude had mentioned the anarchists. She did n't know much about them, but it was an ugly name and associated with bloodshed and strikes and all that. Oh, dear, what a muddle! She would n't bother any more about it now: she would ask Miss Gail by-and-by. There was a step in the hall, a little knock at her door, and Margery sprang hastily from the rug as that lady entered the room.

"Good-morning, Margery! I am just in time, I see. I thought you would like a bath this warm morning and I came to show you the bathroom."

Margery clapped her hands together and then threw her arms around Miss Gail and hugged her; then sprang back, laughing and blushing.

"You must really pardon me, Miss Gail. I'm too silly for anything this morning; but the sight of all this luxury overpowers me. And the thought of a *bath* was the last straw. Do you know I have n't had one since I left home?"

Miss Gail looked shocked indeed. "Why, Margery!" she said, "you don't mean it? What *would* your mother say? Why, how" —

But Margery hastened to explain.

"Oh, of course I don't mean I have n't *washed* in all that time; but there is a difference, you know, between that and a real bath. Standing before a quart or two of water with a cloth or sponge, and having to spread something on the carpet to keep from slopping, and having to be ever so careful not to splash the wall paper in a room where you can throw out your arms and touch both sides almost — I don't call *that* bathing, do you?"

"Why, no, not exactly," admitted Miss Gail, laughing; "that is, according to our modern notions of it; but very many people have grown up healthy and exceedingly useful on that plan."

"Yes, I suppose so," said Margery; "but I will run and dress now, for it must be late, and I am afraid you are waiting breakfast for me."

"The family have breakfasted already. I asked the cook to send us our breakfast in the library. It is the coolest morning room, and there is a little round table just suited to two, where we can take our ease and have a quiet breakfast-table gossip all by ourselves!"

"Oh, how kind of you! Nothing could be more delightful — I came very near saying *splendid*, but stopped just in time;" and Margery ran off laughing to her toilet.

"What lovely doilies!" said Margery, taking in her hand one of the dainty squares of fine linen which accompanied the fruit course of their *tête-*

*à-tête* breakfast. "I think I never saw more exquisite needlework. Did you do them? Pardon my asking, but I had quite a craze for learning drawn work last winter. I did n't succeed very well. Mamma said I had not patience enough for such fine and exact work."

"It does require much patience and a great deal of time. That is why the work is so expensive. No, I did not do these. If I had done them myself, I should consider them a piece of extravagance which I could ill afford. I have another dozen which are even finer and more elaborate than these. I will show them to you before you go. They are really works of art."

"But these are handmade," said Margery, "and if you could not *afford* to do them yourself, how could you *afford* to hire them done? There must be a catch somewhere, dear Miss Gail, for of course I know you could 'afford' almost anything" —

"Excepting to waste my Master's time," said Miss Gail gently.

"I do not understand. If these things are a waste of precious time, is it not wrong to have them? Is it not wrong to spend money on them when so many poor are suffering? Is it not wrong to have our lovely homes and enjoy them so? Oh, I never knew how I enjoyed mine until I left it so, this summer! And now it seems I can never be happy in it again for thinking of Gertrude in hers. And yet, oh, dear! Miss Gail, this question of rich and poor — I cannot settle it. Everything is in a muddle, and I do not know what is right. I wanted to ask you to help me out of it."

"No, my dear child; you speak truly when you say you cannot settle it. God does not expect you to administer the affairs of the world; that is his part. He only expects you to be as helpful as you can in the little corner where he has seen fit to place you. And if it is in a sunny, sheltered corner, he expects you to grow and bless the world about you according to the abundance of your opportunity. And if it is in a bleak and barren corner like Gertrude's, perhaps it would still be the same he required of you, to *grow* and *bless* according to your utmost power. If to you and me he has chosen to give abundance of this world's goods, we shall be held accountable for the *using*, not for the having. Perhaps I can show you what I mean, by returning to my choice napkins. God has given me money and time and strength to use for him. If I take a very small portion of my money and a great deal of my time, and let my strength go to waste, unused, while I sit and embroider these dainties for my own personal gratification, I am a poor steward, indeed, of his bounty. But I take of my time and strength, and find out a poor woman, a widow, with children dependent upon her. She has been stricken with paralysis of the lower limbs. She will never walk. She sits in her chair and sews what they bring her from the shops at starvation prices. The work is heavy for an invalid, and barely *feeds* the children, making no provision for clothing or the coming of winter.

"The eldest child, a girl of ten, does the housework and the outside business for the family, taking the work back and forth, collecting and expending the scanty pay. Sometimes she is cheated out of a portion of even that. Well, I discover that the woman can do this fine needlework. It is light to handle and a pleasure rather than a task to execute it. I give her an order and set the price myself, not at such a high figure as to let her suspect charity. It is *not* charity in its common sense any more than to pay a high price for a choice painting. I say to her, 'This is skilled work — it ought to be paid accordingly. I appreciate it; I am willing to pay; I am able to pay.' I give an order for a couple of dozen. I spend a little more time and strength, show her work to my friends, and take more orders. She has now all she can do, and I see to it that she is not 'jewed down' in price. These doilies bring her from fifteen to twenty dollars a dozen, and other work is in proportion. I have much of it in my home. Those scrim curtains in drawn work, in the chamber you occupied, were done by her. I gave her fifty dollars for the pair, and they are well worth it. I have been called recklessly extravagant by some very good people, but I can afford to bear that as long as I am sure the Master knows. The poor woman supports her family in comfort now, and they have been saved from the degradation of becoming common paupers. Does not that simplify matters, dear? I spend every cent of my income, and I use much of my time and strength in finding ways to spend it for Him. Do you think I could afford to recklessly cast away the principal?

"My handsome style of living gives me influence among a class of people out of whom I can get custom for the poor, if by no higher means than appealing to their love of luxury, and, in some cases, their rivalry to outdo each other in the elegance — perhaps I ought to say the costliness — of their homes and toilets."

"Is that what you would call making the wrath of man to praise him?"

"Perhaps so," said Miss Gail, laughing; "anyway, their money does actual good, even if they do get credit only for the 'penny' they 'meant to gie.' Your mother works in much the same way, Margery. I had a letter from her yesterday, asking my help about a similar plan for Gertrude."

"For Gertrude! Oh, do tell me about it."

"It seems that that wonderful 'Divide,' where they stayed so long with your father's college friend, is peculiarly rich in its floral treasures. Your mother discovered that pressed specimens of Colorado wild flowers are quite the rage now. They not only put them up in books, but arrange them in panels for framing and for screens, make dainty gift-cards and a great variety of other things with them. She also discovered that Gertrude has a remarkable knack for pressing them nicely and for artistic arrangement. She has even invented some very pretty new ways to use them. So she — your mother, I mean — and Harry have helped her gather and preserve a large quantity of specimens to bring home with her for mounting. She has been encouraged to believe that she may find a market for them here. Now what your mother wishes of me is to help create the demand and fix the price. I shall see your mother's souvenirs when she returns, shall be delighted with them no doubt, and give generous orders myself. Then I shall be sure that Mrs. A, B, and C see mine and desire to possess. So the demand will increase and Gertrude will sell out at good profit. Do you see?"

"Is n't that just *too* — I must say '*splendid*' this time, Miss Gail! Oh, I am *so* glad, and to think that I" — Margery stopped suddenly.

"You may say it, Margery, for it is true. You were the means of giving her this chance. Perhaps the thought of this unexpected good that is coming from it will cheer you during these last two weeks of your vacation."

"Indeed it will. I don't mind owning to you that I have dreaded them a good deal and that they seemed long to look forward to. Now I think I shall not mind them so much — and if I begin to feel dismal when I go back, I shall busy my thoughts with plans for helping to sell Gertrude's flowers."

## CHAPTER XIX.

### A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

BREAKFAST over, Miss Gail and Margery walked a while in the conservatory, talking of the travelers, and still planning about Gertrude's flowers, until at length Miss Gail drew out her watch, saying as she noted the time, —

"I have some household duties, Margery, which will keep me until nearly lunch time. Will you be good enough to excuse me, and amuse yourself until then? There is the library, or the music room, or" —

"Oh, the music room of course!" cried Margery. "Why, dear Miss Gail, do you know I have n't touched a piano since I left home? and I 'm afraid I shall be fearfully out of practice when mamma comes home. Shall I annoy any one in the house, if I practice a while?"

"Certainly not, Margery. It will do us good to hear a little music. I play very little myself, and since sister Helen went away the piano is almost unused. May I wheel father's chair into the back parlor just behind the curtain where he can hear you play? Helen used to play for him so for hours. He says that just the thickness of a curtain between him and the piano makes every difference in the music, softens the sharp notes, and gives it a soothing quality. Have you met my father, Margery?"

"No, Miss Gail; but I have often wished that I might. I am very fond of old people, and I have heard father speak so often of his beautiful patience since his painful accident. If my music will suit him, I should dearly love to play as long as he cares to listen."

"Thank you, dear. I see you have the delightful habit of being unselfish, with all your gifts, and I know your playing will please father. I will bring him in and introduce you."

Twenty years ago Robert Gail had been the popular pastor of a wealthy city church. It was not only a wealthy church, but a working church. It had missions established in nearly every quarter of the city, and the only complaint made against the pastor was that he showed sometimes more real interest in the mission outposts than in the affairs of the parent church. When a large fortune came unexpectedly into his possession, through a line of half-forgotten English ancestors, he resigned his pastorate and gave himself unreservedly to the work of city missions. Bearing his own expenses, subject to no ecclesiastical body, with almost unlimited means at his disposal, he entered heart and soul into a work which had been the ambition of his life. For twelve years he labored at his self-appointed task until his name came to be spoken with love and reverence throughout the entire city, and the number and magnitude of his good deeds the wonder and admiration of all beholders. Then suddenly, without an instant's warning, he was snatched from his prosperous work, and his active career in this world brought to a peremptory close. A rotten stair in a tenement which he was visiting gave way beneath him. The fall caused injuries of the spine which resulted in entire paralysis of the lower limbs, and for eight years now he had lived in this helpless condition. His entire nervous system too had sustained such a shock that, although on bright sunshiny days he was wheeled out in the open air, he was never able to plan or execute anything requiring much mental exertion.

His eldest daughter, Barbara, the Miss Gail to whom you have been introduced, had been, during all these years, his chief dependence. With servants in plenty at his disposal, she had yet been, as he expressed it, the very mind and feet of him. As far as possible she carried on the work to which her father had been so devoted. The income which he had used so generously was now placed wholly at her disposal, and you have already had a hint in her talk with Margery about her method of using it. Mrs. Gail died a few years after her husband's accident, so that on Barbara's shoulders had rested the responsibility of the housekeeping and the care of her invalid father and younger sister, the Helen of whom she had just spoken, and whose marriage to a young lawyer in a neighboring city had, as Margery remembered, been one of the society events of the previous season.

When Miss Gail left her in the music room, Margery sat down at once to the piano, and began playing softly snatches of remembered airs. This she called getting acquainted with the instrument.

"Pianos," she used to say, "are like people. Each one speaks to you in a different voice, and you must become familiar with the tone before you are really at home with it and know whether you are playing well or not."

The instrument which she now handled had a voice of rare quality, rich, full, and mellow on the low notes, clear and flutelike on the high tones, with a soft ripple when she ran her fingers rapidly over the keys, like the dripping of water in the moss-rimmed basin of a woodland spring. So plainly did the tone of the instrument suggest this that almost the first thing she found herself playing was the accompaniment of Tennyson's Brook Song. Naturally enough then, for it was a favorite with them all at home, she sang it softly to herself. As she sang she seemed for the time to forget her surroundings and be once more in the familiar back parlor at home, with the lamps lighted, and father lying back in his easy-chair with closed eyes listening to her singing, while mother's knitting needles glanced in and out among the bright wool which filled her lap, and Harry turned her music and occasionally joined in her song. Again, when she sang

"I steal by lawns and grassy plots
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the wild forget-me-nots,
That grow for happy lovers,"

the "woodsy" suggestion of it all took her thoughts again to Grandma Burney's, and the brook at the foot of the meadow lot, where the willows dipped their branches in the clear water, and

"Here and there a lusty trout"

might be seen darting

"Above the golden gravel."

A tear dropped on the piano keys in front of her. She started guiltily, and dashed at once into the noisiest part of Tam O'Shanter, and played as if she were the veritable Tam himself and the witches had well-nigh overtaken her. This finished, she arose and began looking over the music in the rack and wondering what old Mr. Gail would like, and feeling half sorry she had promised to play for him. He was a minister, and would be sure to want sacred music and the old-fashioned hymns. That would remind her of Sunday evenings at home, and — what ailed her anyway? Was she going to show the white feather in this disgraceful way just as her time of service was nearly ended? Was she to spoil the whole thing by tears and melancholy and homesickness? She wished she had not come near the music room. No doubt Mr. Gail would even want her to play Sweet Home in some one of its manifold arrangements — and Scotch ballads. Yes, he would be sure to want those. She never knew an old person in her life that did not dote on them. There was not the least doubt in the world that she should have to sing Bide a Wee and Bonnie Doon and Land o' the Leal. She hoped he *wouldn't* ask for The Ingleside; that was papa's favorite — she would surely break down on that.

> "But rarer, fairer, finer far
> Is the ingleside to me."

Ah! she had never half realized how true that was before.

> "But give to me my ain dear cot —
> The dear ones o' my ee' — that
> Makes to me a warl' complete."

Tears starting again! Why would those hateful song words keep coming. Hark! was that the door of the back parlor opening? Yes; and a muffled sound of wheels crossing the carpet. They were bringing in Mr. Gail. She saw him in imagination — a thin, sad face, framed in long white hair, and bony, transparent hands grasping feebly the arms of his invalid chair. The song and words in her mind changed suddenly —

"I 'm wearing awa', Jean,
Like snow when 't is thaw, Jean;
I 'm wearin' awa', Jean,
To the Land o' the Leal."

Yes, if he asked her to sing that, it would clearly be her duty — so appropriate, it would indeed be a wonder if he did not like it.

The curtains of the music room parted, and Miss Gail stepped to Margery's side and laid a hand upon her arm.

"Father is here. Will you come and be introduced? He is all impatience to see you. I have told him so much about you."

Margery could scarcely repress a start of surprise when she saw the invalid. His hair was white, to be sure, as became the hair of an octogenarian, but it was well cut and brushed, and his black eyes gleamed from beneath their heavy white brows with almost the fire of youth. Instead of the loose invalid robe in which Margery had pictured him, he wore a suit of black, and every detail of his toilet was as carefully attended to as if he were about to enter the pulpit or call in a lady's parlor. Signs of suffering there were upon his face, if one scrutinized it closely, but the rare smile with which he greeted every one seemed for the time to efface them, and when his face lighted up with enthusiasm, as it so often did when a topic of interest was introduced, one forgot altogether his infirmity, and would have felt no surprise to see him walk across the room in quest of a favorite volume or to show a guest to the door with his old-time courtly grace.

"So this is the dear young lady who has been filling my breast with envy ever since daughter Barbara told me about her," said he, after the first greetings were over, and Miss Gail had left them alone.

"I am sure, sir," said Margery, blushing, "there is not much about me to tell, certainly not to be envied."

"I am not so sure of the last, my dear; but I should be a silly old man indeed to envy you your winsome face and bonnie curls. But it was your work I was thinking about. Daughter has told me how you are spending your vacation, and how nobly you keep to your purpose, and how much more than the first duties you bargained for you are accomplishing, and"—

"Oh, please don't! Mr. Gail; I don't deserve it.

I 'm not the least bit brave — why, just before you came in, I was having such an ugly fit of homesickness and discouragement that I came near being sorry I had ever done it."

"Came *near!* Ah, yes, we all do that. Do you remember, daughter," and Margery never forgot the look of tender seriousness that came into the old man's eyes as he spoke — "do you remember that Jesus '*came near*' in the Garden of Gethsemane? When he prayed '*If it be possible*, let this cup pass — *nevertheless*' — It all hinges on that, my child; on the '*nevertheless*.' As long as we can add that to our homesicknesses and discouragements we are safe. Sometimes I get very homesick here, and when the pain and weariness are unusually hard to bear I wonder if my waiting time is not nearly over, but I have no more real idea of giving up to this feeling than you have of abandoning Mrs. Morgan and taking the next train to Colorado, just as your time is nearly out. But come, let us get away from our human infirmities on the strong wings of some inspiriting music. After you have played for me a while, I want to talk to you about your work. That is what I was envying you, my dear: the chance to live right among the people you wish to help, to think with them, feel with them, labor with them. That was Christ's way. That is the hardest part of my infirmity. I can still give my money, — that is good as far as it goes, — but I cannot give *myself*. . . . Well, well, you must really begin the music in self-defense, or I shall preach to you indefinitely."

"I would much rather hear you talk than to play, sir; that is, unless the music would give you real pleasure."

"It would — it would indeed!"

"Well, then, what will you have?"

"Oh, something stirring — perhaps a real rousing march would be a good thing to start with. Something to make me imagine I am once more in the fight instead of on the 'mustered-out' roll. Just drop the curtain, please, — my head is a trifle weak, — then play as loud as you wish."

Margery obeyed, throwing her whole soul into the music until when she had finished she was a different girl from what she had been a half hour ago. She felt ready for anything. She was sure she could live for months in solitary confinement with Bob and Maggie, if need were. She heard Mr. Gail applaud heartily behind the curtain.

"Ah! that is good!" he said; "that takes all the spiritual rheumatism and neuralgia out of a body. Now let us have more in the same line. I'm only sixty years old now; sing me the Battle Hymn of the Republic and I shall be but forty.

> 'Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming
> of the Lord.'

Do you know it? I think there is a copy of Gospel Hymns in there somewhere; it is in that."

"I know it," said Margery, and attuned by the martial music she had just played, she let her clear young voice ring out in triumphant melody, and when she came to the chorus a deep tremulous bass behind the curtain joined in the

> Glory, glory, hallelujah,
> His truth is marching on.
> In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born
> across the sea,
> With a glory in his bosom that transfigures
> you and me,
> As he died to make men holy, let us die to
> make men free.
> His truth is marching on.

As the last strain died away, Margery was conscious of a strange feeling of exaltation within, a something inexpressibly solemn and glad — a sense of being borne up — up — she scarcely knew whither.

> With a glory in his bosom that transfigures
> you and me.

The words repeated themselves over and over in her mind.

> As he died to make men holy —

Yes, feeling as she did now, she was sure she could die, if need be. How far away and petty and mean seemed all her imaginary troubles of a moment ago! She was sure she should never feel that way again. She had heard people speak of such wonderful joy and exaltation at the moment of conversion. Could it be possible that she had never been converted before and this was what it meant? She had thought she was a disciple of Christ, but she had never felt just this. It troubled her, this cloudy little doubt upon the sky of her newborn rapture.

Mr. Gail parted the curtain with his hand, and looked a moment at the still, rapt face of the young girl.

"What is it, daughter?" he said gently. "Do you too feel the 'glory in your bosom'?"

Margery turned toward her questioner. The clear black eyes beneath the white brows were moist with tears. Following an almost irresistible impulse, she went softly to his side, and kneeling down bowed her head upon the arm of his chair.

"Yes," she said softly; "and I was wondering" —

"What were you wondering, dear child?"

"If I had ever been a Christian before," she said in a half whisper, blushing scarlet at her own temerity, as the thought flashed suddenly upon her that half an hour ago she had never seen Mr. Gail, and now she was giving him a sacred confidence.

The old man laid his hand tenderly upon the bright curls that covered the bowed head and screened the blushing face.

"You are not the first who has been troubled by that thought, in some moment of transfiguration like this. You remember the story of the Transfiguration. Do you think that Peter and James and John first became true disciples when on the mount in company with celestial visitors they felt that transcendent 'glory in the soul'? Ah! no. It was when they left their fishing nets and followed him that they might learn to become fishers of men. There is but one Mount of Transfiguration in the whole gospel story — Yes, thank God, and but one Gethsemane, but there are many dusty highways and toilsome journeys and unappreciated labors and soul-trying misapprehensions. God is very gracious to give us sometimes these little glimpses of the perfect day that awaits us beyond: but they are only glimpses. Very quickly Jesus and the disciples came down from the mountain and found the needy *multitude waiting for them!* They wait for his disciples just so to-day, Margery. I would like to change the last line of the hymn you just sang. I would have it read: —

As he died to make men holy,
Let *us live* to make men free!

*To make men free!* O daughter, did you ever think how many things this waiting multitude need to be freed from? From ignorance, from intemperance, from filth, from self-seeking, from greed. Don't be discouraged, dear child; you are on the right track. By giving you a moment's hint of what a soul can feel, God has helped you, I doubt not, to a fuller sense of the worth of all souls; but do not expect to abide on the mountain. You are young and the long highways stretch before you. May grace, mercy, and peace abide with you forever."

Through all Margery's future life the memory of that hour — the words of the saintly old man and his tender benediction — accompanied her and became an inspiration in many a trying hour.

Margery arose from her knees, and standing a moment by Mr. Gail's chair, she said: —

"I thank you more than I can tell you, for your words, sir. But I fear I have been selfish and overtaxed your strength. If I play you something soft now, will you rest?"

"Let us have one more hymn and then you shall lull me to sleep with any symphony you please. But this must not be our last talk. I have done it all this time, but you will come and see me again and tell me about your work. Save up all the funny things your children say and do. I have not forgotten how to laugh, if I am an old man."

"Indeed, I will come again — as often as you will let me; but what shall I sing for you now?"

"Let us have 'In the cross of Christ I glory.'"

When Miss Gail returned, a short time after, Margery was still playing softly, but her father was sleeping quietly, with his head laid back upon the cushions of the chair. She threw a light afghan over him, and slipping into the music room, whispered Margery to come to lunch.

# CHAPTER XX.

## A RIDE AND A TALK.

MARGERY'S delightful day with Miss Gail was nearing its end. They had lingered over their lunch in the cool dining room, Margery unusually silent, Miss Gail brightly entertaining. After lunch they went to the linen closet, where Miss Gail displayed with much pride the choice doilies and lunch cloths in drawn work, of which she had told Margery in the morning.

"Oh, yes, I am recklessly extravagant," she said laughingly, as she turned the key in the closet; "I even pay what my good friends call fabulous prices to have these luxurious articles properly laundried, but thereby hangs another tale, you see."

"Oh, tell it to me, please."

"Are you not weary, then, of my prattling on the subject of spending money?"

"No, indeed! I can't begin to tell you how much it interests me. I feel as if I had discovered a new world, in which — what shall I call it?

— *spendthriftery* is a most honorable employment, and the spendthrift, instead of being blameworthy and despised, as in our old world, is the recipient of well-earned praise. It is like a fairy tale ; so please tell it."

"Well, then, since you will have it, here it is. In a certain alley down town lives an old woman who has for years earned her living by washing and ironing. It is the only thing she can do, and she does, as you see, beautiful work, but she is too old and broken and her back too weak to stand heavy work. Indeed it is very little of this light, fine work even that she is able to accomplish in a day. When I found her she was on the verge of despair. Her best customer had left her because she could not get her work home more promptly, and she saw nothing before her but to eat the bread of charity. To her, who had always lived an industrious, independent life, it would be bitter bread indeed. Well, of course I thought of my doilies and my laces, and I took them to her. I made the poor old soul believe that no one in the city could do such work as hers, and that the price I paid her was nothing to me and only a just reward for skilled labor. So she 'potters' and takes her time to do them, and receives as much for her light work as she used to get for heavy, back-breaking washing. And besides the money she gets for it, she takes solid comfort in having her work praised and appreciated. As a special favor to Mrs. X, Y, and Z, I consent to get a few choice things done for them by my 'perfect treasure' as they call my unknown laundress, but I don't give her address. If I did, some one would soon be harrying her with a miserable 'jewing down' or, worse still, finding fault with her work from sheer force of habit. I act as her sole agent, and it is pay enough to see her childish content and happy independence."

"And these odd, beautiful rugs," said Margery as they crossed the hall. "Is there a fairy tale about them too? I never saw anything like them!"

"Yes, they too have their story; but I shall not tell it now. It is time for our *siesta,* and when that is over I will take you to see the fairy who made them. You will find her a queer-looking fairy, I am afraid. But now go to your room, like a dutiful child, and rest during these hot hours. The phaëton will be ready for us at five, when I mean to take you for a little drive. You see, you are wholly at my mercy to-day."

"If I never fall into less merciful hands, my lot will be happy indeed," answered Margery gayly, as they separated in the broad, softly-lighted hall and went each to her own room.

Miss Gail, with the ease of a long-established habit, was soon soundly asleep in her darkened chamber, deaf for the time to the turbulent cries of the city, whose unfortunate ones laid such fast hold upon her heart, unconscious for a long, blissful hour of the heat which was slowly scorching away the good temper, the ambition, the life even, of the masses to whom her great heart went forth. This midday rest was one of the means which she used religiously for the preservation of that rugged health which enabled her to do so much during the heated term — when all her wealthy neighbors fled the city. A few weeks at most, sometimes not even that, was all the vacation she allowed herself from her self-imposed duties. Self-imposed? No, rather, let us say, love-impelled.

Margery, however, could not sleep so readily. She lay quietly resting in the loose robe that Miss Gail's careful thought provided, thinking of the strange workaday fairyland into which she was gaining entrance, and building all sorts of air castles with which to adorn this new world of brotherly love.

At last, however, she too fell asleep, and when Miss Gail's knock at her door aroused her she was sailing away with Bob Stark and Maggie Dart on a raft of huge bananas, over a lemonade sea in which blocks of ice and mountains of ice-cream floated alluringly, while the strange craft was wafted on its way by sails of fine doilies and lunch cloths.

Margery wondered somewhat at the vehicle which awaited them beneath the carriage porch. She had expected Miss Gail's own little basket phaëton in which she drove to the mission school, and whose luxuriously cushioned seat she had several times shared with her. In its stead, however, she saw a plain, two-seated surrey, to which was harnessed a large, sleepy looking horse, which stood with head down, soberly flicking the flies in a leisurely way, scarcely taking the trouble to look up in response to Miss Gail's "All ready, Jerry?" as she patted his sleek side, while Margery mounted to her place upon the front seat.

"We shall be a family party by-and-by," she explained, as she took the lines from the waiting man, saying, "I will drive to-day, John."

"I had at first thought to take a vacation this afternoon," she continued, "and take you in the phaëton for a long country drive, but on second thoughts I decided to let you see me in my workshop. Jerry is my work horse. He looks lazy enough, but he is the trustiest old fellow alive, and is so thoroughly in the spirit of the work that I could not get on without him. Get up, now, Jerry, and show us your finest invalid trot, for we have much to do to-day. Here, this way, Jerry! We go to Mrs. Smith's first."

"Who is Mrs. Smith?" asked Margery.

"She is a woman who lives in a tenement down on Third Street and sews carpets for a living. This is her afternoon out. I could not bear to disappoint her. That was one reason I decided to take you this way instead of in the phaëton."

"But could not John have driven her? I don't mean, of course, that I don't like this way. Nothing could please me better than to be let into your secrets — to see you work."

"No; in this case John would not do. You shall see why presently."

The air became fairly stifling as they neared the residence of Mrs. Smith on Third Street.

"How do people live here?" questioned Margery in horror.

"They are used to it," replied Miss Gail sadly.

"Many of them never breathed a purer air. They are born in it and die in it—poor, ignorant things—ignorant of God's great, beautiful, bountiful world. No wonder they think hard thoughts of him sometimes! I am sure he makes allowance for them if they do. It is n't much use to bring them tracts until you have first given them a breath of fresh air."

Margery was soon ushered into a room whose principal furnishing seemed to be heaps of carpet, and whose floor was covered with a plain straw matting. Large steel hooks were screwed into the wall on opposite sides of the room, and about four feet from the floor. Attached to these hooks by strong cords two breadths of carpet, pinned in place for sewing, were stretched across the room, and beside it sat a delicate young woman plying her needle with almost nervous energy. The one small window opening into the court at the back of the house was open, as was also the door into the hall way; but it seemed to Margery, as she entered the stifling room, that the only purpose served by this attempted ventilation was to let in the swarms of flies which buzzed about the perspiring face of the overheated worker.

"Good-afternoon, Mrs. Smith; are we all ready?

Let me introduce my friend, Miss Mayne. She bears me company to-day while you go for your ride. Jerry is in fine order; does n't seem to mind the heat in the least. Who goes with you to-day? Oh, yes! Miss Andrews and the McAfferty children. Will the baby be able to go?"

"I think so; Miss Andrews said she 'd drive if I could hold the baby, and I was wondering if we could make room to stow little Carl Bowerstock in someway — he sat up nearly three hours yesterday, and gets round some on his crutch; but the hot weather tells on him bad."

"Ah, yes, I remember — the newsboy that was run over by the street car! Of course he ought to go; but perhaps I 'd better take him with me in the next load. My friend here will like to look after him, and the air will be still cooler then."

"Oh, if you could! The little fellow has been so brave, but it frets him so — the lost time. His mother has to work just that much harder, you see."

Mrs. Smith's utterances were in a strange hoarse whisper, which made Margery almost shudder. At first, she wondered if there were cause for secrecy, but soon found that the poor woman spoke with all the voice she had. As she rose to make ready for her ride, Margery noted with quick compassion her bent form, round shoulders, and hollow chest, which heaved painfully with every breath she drew. So intent was she upon Mrs. Smith that she did not notice Miss Gail's movements in the meantime, and was not a little startled to see her, with a long-sleeved gingham apron buttoned over her street toilet, take Mrs. Smith's chair beside the carpet and begin to sew industriously.

"But could n't she go without your doing this, Miss Gail?" questioned Margery, as soon as Mrs. Smith was out of hearing.

Miss Gail shook her head. "She is paid by the yard, so of course her time is just so much money; and besides there is just so much work to be done in the establishment by which she is employed, and if she does not do her full share she loses her place. There are plenty standing ready to take it, and work over hours if need be. The fewer the women employed, the less trouble it is to the firm. Do you see?"

"But her voice! She must have throat or lung trouble."

"Both."

"But this carpet sewing — the dust and lint — the heavy lifting — the stooping. I should think it the worst work in the world for her."

"It is the best she can find. She can make more at it than at light work. She has a daughter with spinal complaint; she pays her board in the country for two months every summer. It is a small sum, as we are accustomed to count, Margery; but for her — well, you see how she earns it."

The quick tears sprang to Margery's eyes.

"Let me help sew, Miss Gail. It will be a few cents more."

"No, dear; you do not know how. Even carpet sewing is a trade; I learned from her. The little you could do in an hour would not count, it would take so much time to show you."

"She would not take money given outright, I suppose?"

"No more than you or I would, Margery. She drives my horse for me to give her poor neighbors an airing. I would rather sew than drive so much. Do you see? We have to contrive all sorts of schemes to reach those most worthy of help. But I was going to tell you about my rugs, which you admired so much.

They began right here. You see she makes many handsome rugs and bordered carpets. They let her have the corners which come out of the borders. She showed me a pile she was saving to make a carpet for herself. She hoped to get time evenings to piece them together, but she was so tired at night, and her back ached so, that she kept putting it off!

"I began placing them together on the floor and soon saw that a very quaint and really elegant rug might be made by piecing them together, crazy fashion, with an eye to arrangement and coloring; but it would be slow, tiresome work. I suggested that matting would be more useful for her dusty work, and that I should be only too glad to buy her pieces for a rug and hire them made up. She assented readily and knew just the woman who needed work and would do them for me. We go to see her this afternoon. As I told you, she is a strange-looking fairy."

"Where do Mrs. Smith and her charges go?"

"Just a mile out of town. There is a country place there — just a suburban residence on a half-acre lot — but there is plenty of shade and pure water. The grounds are lovely. We shall go there by-and-by — when Mrs. Smith returns. It is owned by a dear friend of mine who is traveling in Europe with her daughters. She has been kind enough to place the establishment entirely at my disposal, servants and all, so we use it for our 'fresh airs' who can only be gotten away temporarily. It is wonderful, the good it does. So easy of access, and the servants enter heartily into the work; such delightful lunches as they spread for us under the elms on the back lawn! All the small fruit on the place — and there is much of it — has been served to the children that way, as well as the milk of the fine Jersey cow. Mrs. Smith and her party will get their supper there. They go, or rather, *she* goes with different parties three times a week. On the other three days another sewing woman from another quarter of town takes a party. She ties comfortables for a living."

"Do you substitute for her also?"

"Yes; that is the only way most of them can go. The first parties come back at half-past six. Then I gather my party, which I drive myself. If I am needed somewhere else, I send a substitute, as I did last night, for instance. Sometimes John drives them. He is quite willing to do this, as there is a very pretty waiting maid at the villa who seems quite pleased at his coming. We shall have our tea there to-night, and you shall take charge of Carl Bowerstock if you will. You will find him a really entertaining companion."

Conversing thus the hour passed swiftly away in spite of the heat and discomfort of the small apartment, and Mrs. Smith appeared in the doorway long before Margery expected her.

"Really, Miss Gail," she said, as she laid aside her plain sunbonnet and drew off her worn, cotton gloves, "I feel someway as if I ought to pay something for these rides and suppers. I have so much the best end of the bargain, you see. My work going right on — what a long strip you have sewed to-day; why, you 're getting to be a master hand at the work! As I was saying, my work goes on as well or better than if I was here, and the ride and country air and the fruit and cream and all that — we had ice cream to-night too. How the poor little McAffertys did go for it! 'T would do your heart good to see them. But, as I said, to have all that and then come home bright as a new penny, and no supper to get, and able to put in a good extra hour at the work and not feel it a bit — someway I feel 's if I was *gouging* somebody."

"Not a bit," replied Miss Gail brightly; "on the contrary you do me a real favor. You see, we *must* get two parties out there, and you surely would not have me eat two suppers nor let me get sick of going so often to one place. As for the sewing, you can't realize it because you do so much of it, but an hour or so at a time is a real change and pleasure to me. I insist that I am the debtor. But come, Margery, we must be off or the children will be impatient. Good-night, Mrs. Smith. Please don't waste the little strength you 've gained by sewing too late."

The "rug fairy" whom Miss Gail promised to show Margery proved to be a tiny hunchback — a woman of forty with the stature of a child of ten or less. So deformed was she that no ordinary work was possible; but, sitting in the tiny, cushioned chair which Miss Gail had had made especially for her, she could put the rugs together piece by piece, and the work was a real delight, serving to while away many a tedious hour, while the generous pay which she received brought her many unwonted comforts, and made her feel much less a burden on the busy sister whose home she shared.

She made one of the second party to the villa, on this occasion, and Margery hardly knew which she enjoyed most, the bright smile and happy enthusiasm of the little, black-eyed child-woman, or the droll witticisms of Carl Bowerstock. They occupied one seat of the surrey with her, while she also held a year-old baby in her lap and agreed to be responsible for the staying-in of a four-year-old boy cuddled at their feet.

The tea and the ice-cream feast at the villa were all that Margery's imagination had conjured, and as they drove out to Mrs. Morgan's in the twilight after having returned their party to their homes, they talked but little; but over and over in Margery's thought the words of old Mr. Gail repeated themselves,

> "As he died to make men holy,
> Let us live to make men free."

Live! Oh, how she would live! Life tingled in her every vein. Weariness, discouragement vanished again. She had but just discovered the real purpose of living. She said something of this to Miss Gail, who repeated softly: —

"'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' That was Christ's mission. It is ours to help him bestow it — to open avenues to him."

As they parted at Mrs. Morgan's gate, Miss Gail smiled brightly into Margery's eyes as she asked: —

"Can you bear the remaining two weeks now?"

"Yes, twenty of them!" answered Margery impulsively. "O dear Miss Gail, you can never know how this day has helped, especially the last part — and your father."

"I think I can guess, dear. Good-night; but remember, don't try to carry all the world."

The two weeks, however, were destined to be spent in a very different way from that which either had anticipated. When Margery entered the cottage she found a letter from grandma Burney awaiting her, which, as the next chapter will show, made a decided alteration in her plans.

# CHAPTER XXI.

## IN THE COUNTRY.

MY DEAR MARGERY, — But two short weeks of your summer vacation now remain, and I have your mother's permission to urge that you spend them with me. It was a great disappointment to me to be obliged to forego my usual visit from your mother and the children, not to mention the absence of my favorite Margery. We have borne it as patiently as we could, — grandpa and I, — but the old house has seemed lonely all summer and we have longed for the sound of children's voices. Now you must come to me with your friend, Mrs. Morgan, and the two boys, with whom I already feel acquainted from your mention of them in your letters. Although Mrs. Morgan and I have not met for many years, I do not forget her intimacy with your mother, when they were your age, and nothing would give me greater pleasure than to renew the acquaintance with her at this time.

The harvest apples are ripe, just waiting for boys to shake them off, and my hen yard is full of plump pullets ready for a "fry," and no one but grandpa and me to use them. I know you will not refuse me, and grandpa will be at the station the day after to-morrow to meet you with the carryall. You will reach here just about noon, and dinner will be spread for six. Give my love to the boys, and tell them that the old roan horse will carry double, and has been growing fat and lazy, missing Ted and Dot, who have been for two years his summer riders.

With much love and happy anticipation of our meeting, I am, Margery, your affectionate grandmother, ELIZABETH BURNEY.

Enclosed with this was a note to Mrs. Morgan, giving her a personal invitation in more formal phrase, but in the same sweetly cordial strain.

Margery gave both letters to Mrs. Morgan, too excited to speak. Would she — oh! *would* she go? Her heart fairly stood still with anxiety as she watched Mrs. Morgan's countenance while she read the letters.

And Mrs. Morgan? As she read the gracious words, breathing the old-fashioned hospitality of her childhood days and full of sweet suggestions of freedom, rest, and plenty, it seemed to her for a moment as though the gates of paradise had been flung wide open for her entrance. But as usual that stern sentinel, Pride, who continually guarded the outposts of her heart, stepped forth, with intent to close them ruthlessly before her very eyes and lock them with the key of firm refusal. She laid down the letters, and began to say very calmly: —

"Of course, Margery, it is very kind of your grandmother to ask us, but" —

"*Don't*," cried Margery impulsively, and putting out her hand as if to ward off a blow — "please don't say any 'buts,' dear Mrs. Morgan. Think of the boys — think how pale Walter is growing, and Fred was restless all night, and Miss Gail says the fever is spreading fearfully — and — and" — losing all self-control and speaking without a moment's reflection — "*I do so want to go!*"

"Why, of course," said Mrs. Morgan, "*you* will go. It would not be treating your grandmother right to refuse; but *our* going is a different thing, and I do not" —

"But I certainly shall not go without you, and nothing that you can say will make me change my mind!"

Mrs. Morgan looked at Margery in amazement. She had never heard her speak in that tone before, and one glance at her face assured her that she meant what she said. Her own face paled slightly, and with a sudden revulsion of feeling she dealt Pride a heavy blow and said quietly:—

"I think, Margery, we will accept your grandmother's invitation."

It was Margery's turn to be surprised.

"Oh, forgive me!" she said. "I did not mean to be selfish, and I am afraid I was rude—but I do so *much* want you to go!"

"You were neither selfish nor rude," replied Mrs. Morgan, speaking with unusual gentleness. "It was I who was wrong. I am very grateful to your grandmother, and we must waste no time if we do not wish to disappoint them."

"Oh, it is too good to be true!" cried Margery, the quick tears springing to her eyes. "Whatever will Gertrude say? May I tell the boys now? Oh, what *will* they say? Walter! Fred! come here, come quick—I've such news for you!" and she rushed gayly from the room, leaving Mrs. Morgan to recover as best she might from the surprise of the new situation in which she found herself, and to begin plans for their sudden journey.

So the dinner spread for six was partaken of by the expected guests in the long, cool dining room of the farmhouse — a room with comfort and plenty suggested by its every feature. Poor Mrs. Morgan could hardly tell which feelings were uppermost in her mind, whether of joy or sorrow, for the sight of the old-fashioned farmhouse standing in its little grove of elms and maples and poplars, the large, hospitable house, with its pure white paint and its cool, green blinds, its broad veranda with the old-fashioned *settee*, sent such a throng of bygone memories rushing in upon her heart that it was with difficulty she could command herself to greet the sweet-faced old lady in her white cap who stood by the gate to welcome them, and who, with her own hands, lifted Fred from the carryall and gave him such a grandmotherly kiss as stole his heart completely away on the instant.

Oh, then it all came back — those summer visits that she used to make to *her* grandmother when she was of the age that Walter and Fred were now. And they — they had never known a grandmother and had never before, since their memory, been without the limits of the noisy, dusty city. No wonder that Fred whispered to Margery in an awe-struck voice as the carryall stopped before the gate, and asked her if this was heaven and if God lived in that big, white house, and if that was an angel who stood by the gate, the one with the pretty silver hair and its wings folded down tight. (Grandma Burney wore the old-fashioned plaited white kerchief crossed upon her breast.) And the old-fashioned sitting room! It might have been her own grandmother's, so like it all was to the one she remembered. The broad, wood fireplace, with its brass andirons (it was filled in now with great branches of asparagus covered with red berries), and its high mantel on which stood vases of dried grass and immortelles and a big blue pitcher filled with marigolds, bachelor buttons, ragged lady, and all the dear old flowers. Yes, and there was the very cupboard, or long, low closet at one side of the fireplace, where the wood for the next day was stored each night and neatly shut in by a black-painted door to match the mantel. Above the mantel hung the family record, with bunches of peacock feathers crossed above it, and all about the walls were family portraits done in oil, mostly of elderly people with hands stiffly crossed, but there was one young girl of seventeen, perhaps, in a blue seeded silk dress and a mass of golden hair gathered in a net and hanging low upon her neck.

Mrs. Morgan started when she saw it. It was Margery's mother, and she had worn that very dress when they walked together from church one Sunday in the long ago, and she had confided to her the wonderful news of her engagement to Walter Morgan! How far they had grown apart in all these intervening years, and now what a singular bond was drawing them together again! How they were living it all over in the intimacy of their daughters, but how strangely altered were their relations!

But the room — her thoughts came back to that. There was the homemade yarn carpet, with its gay stripes of red, green, and yellow, the flowered chintz curtains at the windows, the broad, chintz-covered lounge, the old-fashioned wooden rockers, cushioned with the same material, and the high-backed, splint-bottomed chairs. There, too, was the moss hanging basket in the south window, with its long arms of wandering

Jew, its cool, shining ice plant and golden-starred money vine. There was the paper receiver against the wall, made of stiff pasteboard and covered with gayly-flowered wall paper, and a match set of perforated cardboard, the work of some more modern daughter of the family. And there was — but now they were called into the dining room; and still the familiar aspect of everything continued. The green slat curtains at the windows, the green paint of the wainscoted room, the straw matting on the floor, the square-cornered leaf table, with its snowy linen and dark blue landscaped crockery. Everything to eat was on it, and there were no courses; so the boys could enjoy to the full their calculations of how much chicken they could afford to eat if they left room enough for apple pie and doughnuts and strawberry preserves. And such milk! A great blue pitcher filled to the brim with rich, creamy milk, to be poured out in glasses and drunk as freely as water!

And after dinner was over do you think the boys were long in finding the orchard and the old roan horse — and — Well, if you ever have been a boy, you know all about it, and if you have not there is no use in my trying to tell you. I doubt if I ought to have brought my party to the farm — it will be so hard to get away with them again; and, on second thoughts, as I must leave them somewhere very soon, vacation being so nearly over, I think I will leave them there. Surely we shall have pleasant memories of them so. And the truth is, when the first of September came and brought with it the leave-taking, only half of the party could be gotten away — for grandma could not give up Fred, and grandpa could by no means spare Walter, who, as he said, had become his "right hand man"; and when Mrs. Morgan shook her head and said something about school, Mrs. Burney laid her hand gently on her arm and, looking into her eyes with a clear, steady gaze, said: —

"My dear, what is *school* to health and strength for these dear children? But it is not the school that troubles you, I think. You know how much we want them; you know how glad they would be to stay a while longer; you know the city is full of heat and sickness for a month or two yet, and surely you will not let your" —

"No, no, I will not let it," said Mrs Morgan vehemently. "You need not say the word. It is an ugly word, and I am beginning to believe that the poor have more of it than the rich. The boys shall stay, and the Lord will bless you for it; I cannot."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Burney; "I am blessed already, and you ought to be, for the good Word tells us it is more blessed to give than to receive, and you have given me — for a time — your boys."

Before we leave them, however, I wish to tell you about the last vacation Sunday, as I told you about the first. Not about the entire Sunday, either, but about Mrs. Morgan in church. She had been persuaded to go with the family that morning, partly for fear of offending if she refused, and partly because of the pleasure of the long ride to the country church. Again, at sight of the plain, white church with its tall spire, and surrounded by the city of the dead, came those tender, thronging thoughts and visions of her youth. How light-hearted she had been then! How bright life seemed before her! She looked almost enviously at a group of gay, rosy-cheeked girls just passing in at the door. Even Walter and Fred seemed to have forgotten their poverty, and were taking their fill of boyish comfort. Margery seemed to have thrown off every vestige of care since she came to the farm, and was gladness personified. Grandpa and grandma Burney wore their habitual look of serene cheerfulness. She alone, of all the congregation, seemed borne down by burdens too heavy to bear. Gertrude, too, had been able to cast off her load for a season. She was coming home soon — would she be sorry to take it up again? She had been all these weeks with Mrs. Mayne, and had grown to love her dearly — so her letters said. A pang of unreasoning jealousy passed sharply through her heart. What if — but no, she would not think of that — Gertrude was all in all to her. She had been a good daughter; but to-day, among all these kind people, she felt so alone!

As they sat now in the little straight-backed pew, waiting for service to begin, she was so absorbed by these thoughts that she scarcely heeded what was going on about her. Margery had taken her place in the choir. They always expected her to sing if she was at the farm but a single Sunday. The minister walked up the aisle and entered the pulpit. Mrs. Morgan did not see him. The congregation rose as the organist struck the first notes and sang, —

> "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow."

Mrs. Morgan did not sing. She felt no praise in her heart. Mechanically she bowed her head when the minister said, "Let us pray," but she heard not a word of the prayer. Instead of the prayer, these words had taken possession of her thoughts and were repeating themselves over and over to her: —

"Spirit, O my spirit, is it thou art out of tune,
Art thou clinging to December while the earth is in its June?
Hast thou dropped thy part in nature? hast thou touched another key?
Art thou angry that the anthem will not, can not, wait for thee?"

She did not even heed the minister's "Amen," or know that the prayer was finished until the notes of the organ sounded again.

Softly, sweetly ran the prelude, waking a strange responsive echo in Mrs. Morgan's heart, as of a loved and long-forgotten but suddenly recalled melody. What was this strangely familiar strain? Now the choir took it up and gave it voice and language, Margery's clear, sweet soprano separated from the rest as a solo from its accompaniment, —

"Cast thy burden on the Lord."

Over and over the sweet invitation rang out, rising and falling softly in the hush of the summer air, —

"He will sustain thee;
He will strengthen thee;
He will comfort thee;"

Higher and higher rose the notes. Full of triumphant assurance rang Margery's voice, so that Mrs. Morgan felt a strong emphasis on the "will" scarcely demanded by the music, which fell again in soft cadence and ended in the refrain

"Cast thy burden on the Lord."

After that, all through the sermon, Mrs. Morgan heard only the words of this old-fashioned anthem, whose sweet music had made it one of the favorites of her girlhood, but which she had not heard for years and years. She was peculiarly silent on their homeward ride, but both grandma and Margery thought they noticed that her pale face wore a look more akin to peace than they had ever seen there before.

Months afterward she told Margery how, upon that Sunday, in answer to the gracious invitation of her song, she did indeed cast the burden which for so many weary years she had borne alone upon Him who so long ago had "carried our sorrows." And Margery's eyes filled with glad tears as she said, "And I was thinking of *you* all the time as I sang."

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE KALEIDOSCOPE.

AMONG the playthings of my childhood of which I seldom tired was a cheap kaleidoscope. I can recall distinctly now the pleasure which it gave to watch the almost infinite variety of form and coloring which could be produced by a slight turn or jar of the instrument, and when, one unlucky day, my treasure was broken in pieces, with what wonder I surveyed the very few and insignificant pieces of common, colored glass which had produced these brilliant effects. Since then I have sometimes thought that we, as individuals, stand in somewhat the same relation to the moral beauty and spiritual welfare of the world as these bits of glass to the real object of the kaleidoscope, which is to show, not the beauty or worth of each separate piece of glass, but what beauty is possible when they move easily, promptly, and harmoniously together. But in the case of the human kaleidoscope — reverently let it be said — it is God who shakes the glass and there is no chance in the arrangement of the pieces.

One of my childish amusements used to be, when playing with this instrument, to fix in my memory the color and shape of one particular piece and see where it would turn up in the next figure — now at top, now at bottom, in the middle, on one side; which is also the way the human figures move.

Let us take a few glimpses into this wonderful instrument, with our eyes upon the figures which we have been following in the preceding chapters of this story.

It is set now at a time shortly after the return of the Mayne party from Colorado, and what do we see? Gertrude, with renewed health and vigor, busy with her school studies and the preparation of her wild flower souvenirs, which are selling faster than she can find time to prepare them. Gertrude also a member of the Christian Endeavor Society, and with Margery helping in the mission school, where the latter still retains her summer class and strives to give a proper bent to the somewhat original mind of Bob Stark. Walter and Fred are still at the farm, and so happily and healthily seems to pass their life there and so loath to part with them seem their foster grandparents that Mrs. Morgan almost despairs, sometimes, of being able to get them home again. Margery thinks the best part of it all is to see the smile come back to Mrs. Morgan's face and to see how the old-time intimacy between her own mother and the mother of her dearest friend is reviving and growing and ripening into a helpful friendship, which shall prove — so she thinks, viewing it with partial eyes — of untold benefit to Mrs. Morgan! That her own mother could be improved by any social contact is to her an impossible idea — so impossible indeed that it has never entered her mind at all. Mrs. Morgan too is much improved in health, and, though the cough does not leave her, with the cares of mind and body lightened she endures her labor with so much greater ease that Gertrude is able to pursue this, her last year's work in school, comparatively free from that wearing anxiety about her mother's health.

And Maggie Dart? Mrs. Morgan no longer dreads her influence over the boys, when they shall return from the farm. She is by no means perfect, of course; but she is the firm friend and ally of the Morgan family, and Gertrude can hardly wonder enough at the change which has taken place in her. She finds no time now to hang over the line fence and plot mischief, so busy is she with keeping the little house in order and learning to sew and mend. Her heart swells with pride and pleasure when her father tells her how like her "maw" she is growing every day. She finds him more than ready to coöperate with her in all her plans for "fixing up" their home. Among other things he has made a couple of neat bookshelves to hold Maggie's treasures, and Miss Gail and Margery are careful to see that an occasional new and truly helpful volume finds a place beside the "Memawrs of Nathan Dickerman" and the rest of her queer collection. Gertrude, too, has taken quite on interest in her. She has even undertaken the task of helping her bring her arithmetic and geography up to such a point that she can enter school another year without going into a class with such small children as to shame her. In return for this Maggie's strong hands do much of the heavy work at the Morgan cottage. Maggie is also a member of Miss Gail's class in the mission school. This class, by the way, are bending every energy to earn money for a new library for the school. It is a profound secret between them, of course, but they mean to have the nucleus of it, at least, ready to present to the school at Christmas time, and then the other classes will be allowed to help. Do you not think that clean, new books purchased thus, and selected by the careful judgment of Miss Gail and Mrs. Mayne, will be read with more interest than the cast-off volumes of twenty years ago, given as old clothes are to beggars? Little by little Miss Gail means to draw Maggie into her other charities, for she believes no other stimulant to spiritual growth is so great as working for others. Gladly would we linger here to see this newborn soul grow toward the light, but we must hasten on.

The kaleidoscope turns: It is holiday time. There is a Christmas tree in Mrs. Mayne's handsome parlors, and the house is ablaze with light, warmth, and beauty. Quick! take a glance at the faces of the guests before it turns again — Mrs. Morgan, Gertrude, Miss Gail, grandpa and grandma Burney, Walter and Fred — yes, and Bob Stark and all the other members of Margery's, Gertrude's, and Miss Gail's classes in the mission school.

Turn again: June, and Gertrude's graduation, of course with the honors of her class and all that.

One more turn: In Colorado again. A little log house on the wonderful "Divide," just a few rods from the home of the hospitable Hewitts.

In this house the Morgans are established on a ten-acre lot which, with the house and a yard full of fine chickens, was purchased with the money from the sale of their city home. Mrs. Morgan's needle is laid aside now. She keeps the simple little home, helps the boys tend the chickens, and superintends the garden and gathers and presses flowers for the very profitable work which Gertrude still carries on in that line. As for Gertrude, she is mistress of the district school a mile away, to which the boys accompany her every morning, and are very much in love with their teacher. They are coming home now. You can see them on the crest of that pine-covered knoll — Walter and Fred chasing chipmunks, pelting each other with pine cones, and reveling in the delight of being boys — and country boys at that. Gertrude comes on with quick, elastic step, her sun hat, wreathed with glossy green kinnikinic, hanging on one arm, while the other is filled with floral treasures. Some one from the Hewett house has seen them too — a girl in white, with sunny curls about her face. She speaks to a young man who is stretched lazily in a hammock near by. With sudden alacrity he springs to his feet, and together they walk toward the knoll to meet the young "schoolma'am" and her charge. Do you know them? Yes, Harry and Margery are spending the summer with the Hewetts.

Shall we turn again? Such wonderful possibilities this strange instrument holds. For instance, after turns enough, there will be Harry and Gertrude — but no; we must stop somewhere, and perhaps this is the very best place at which to put our kaleidoscope aside.

I am afraid it is with my story as with our lives. We just get into the best part of them when we are compelled to lay them down. Our individual effort is like a stone cast into water. We can see the few first ripples before we sink, but the ripples go on and on, ever widening after we are lost to sight.

So I leave it to you, dear reader, to follow, in imagination, the ever-widening circles of helpfulness which started from Margery's pebble thrown into the sea of human needs.

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